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TRAVELS IN THE FREE STATES

OF

CENTRAL AMERICA.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
Printed by SPOTTISWOODE & Co.
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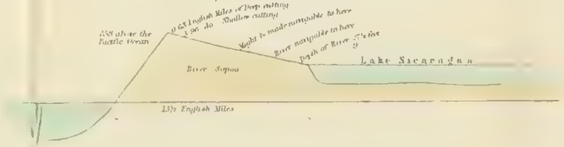

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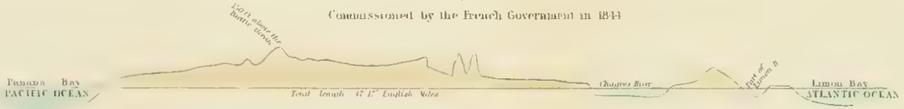

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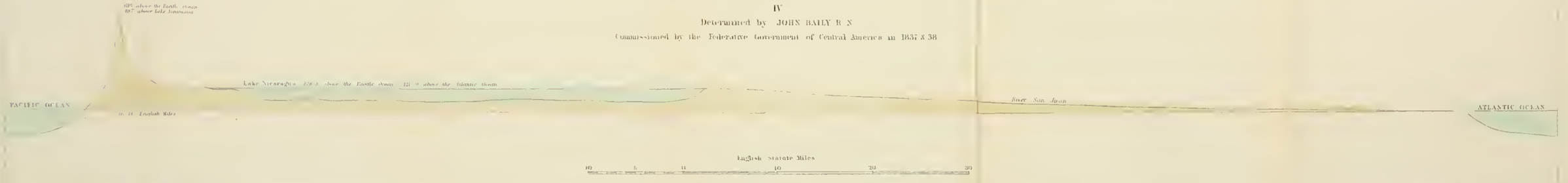

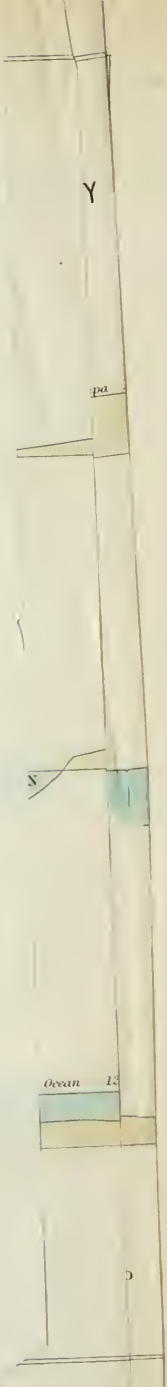
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TRAVELS IN THE FREE STATES

OF

CENTRAL AMERICA:

NICARAGUA, HONDURAS, AND SAN SALVADOR.

BY

DR. CARL SCHERZER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, & ROBERTS.

1857.

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NICARAGUA, HONDURAS,

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FROM TEGUCIGALPA TO COMAYAGUA.

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One of the most unpleasant circumstances of travelling in these countries is the frequent difficulty of getting on. Those who wish to travel slowly, and make a considerable stay in many places, will seldom find it to their advantage to have their own mules, especially in the dry season, when fodder is scarce and very dear;

and yet mules are not always to be had on hire. I tried all sorts of plans during a whole year; but after all found it, all things considered, the best plan to hire. You have the advantage of being able to change the animals from time to time, when they are tired, for fresh ones from the pasture; the guide is far more careful of them when they are his own; and you do not find yourself obliged, when you come to the end of your journey, to sell them for one third of what they have cost you; for the people of the place, knowing that you must sell, will certainly not offer you more. I myself had to sell a good strong mule for twenty piastres, although I had given seventy for it a few months before, because it was known that, as I was going on board ship, I was obliged to part with it. The only objection to the plan of hiring is the uncertainty that it casts over your itinerary; since the number of strangers travelling in these countries has been hitherto so small that this branch of business has been very little attended to. There are but few of the inhabitants who keep more horses or mules than they require for their own use, and these few are too proud or too distrustful to let them out for the sake of gaining a few piastres.

Beasts of burden for the transport of goods there are, indeed, in great abundance; but they are not easy to obtain at the time when the productions of the country have to be taken to the various ports, and the European goods brought thence to the interior. These animals are also only adapted for the transport of goods.

At the time when I was about to leave Tegucigalpa and continue my journey to the capital (seventy-two miles off), there was a great scarcity of mules and horses, and I had much difficulty in procuring the necessary number. Three several times had I made arrangements with proprietors for my journey, and always received a refusal the evening before I was about to set off. No less was the difficulty of finding a good guide and servant, so as not to be exposed to the danger of being cheated, robbed, or perhaps murdered on the way. In these lonely, untrodden forests the temptation is often very great to these men, eager as they are for gold, to get possession, by the murder of an unknown traveller, of what to them must seem a considerable sum; and it is therefore necessary to be extremely careful in the choice of the attendant who is to be your sole companion for weeks in passing

through the dreariest solitudes; but fortunately, the natives of these countries are generally very cowardly, and therefore attempts at murder are much more rare than, considering the many opportunities and the rude state of the people, might have been anticipated. I offered an Indian specially recommended to me twenty piastres to accompany me to Santa Rosa, a distance of 253 miles, which, like myself, he was to do on horseback, and have all his wants provided for; yet I could not secure his services.

One is often compelled, against one's will, to make a frequent change of guides; since, unlike the Anglo-American race, the people here are unwilling to leave their native soil to follow a stranger in long and distant journeys.

In order that I might continue my journey somehow, I was obliged at last to content myself with mules who looked very much as if they needed to make this a period of repose from the toils they had previously undergone; and at the same time I was under the necessity of engaging a servant who had been described to me as anything but honest and trustworthy. With good cattle the ride from Tegucigalpa to Comayagua may be made in one day. The letter-carrier generally

goes on foot in fourteen hours; but, with a heavy caravan, one has a prospect of not reaching the capital of Honduras in less than two long day's journeys.

From the Questa Grande, a tolerably high mountain that rises just beyond Tegucigalpa, you may get a last look into the beautiful highland valley in which the pure white houses of the town, with the stately cathedral in the midst, have a very pleasant appearance. There was a grey mist floating in the atmosphere, sometimes veiling the sun for days together without ever forming a cloud, that reminded me of what is called the Indian summer in the west of the United States. The whole sky exhibited a monotonous, hazy tint, probably in both instances proceeding from the great fires in the woods and prairies, which are often kindled intentionally to clear the ground or increase the fertility of the grassy tracts, the carbonated vegetable particles making an excellent manure. In the west of the United States the prairie fires begin late in the autumn, but they extend with such fearful rapidity that they not unfrequently overtake the careless traveller and put him to a torturing death. In Central America the woods destined

to be changed to arable land are commonly set on fire in the beginning of April,—the end of the dry season, — at which time you may see in various parts of the country immense districts in flames, and feel a burning heat diffused through the air. It may be supposed that a conflagration extending over many thousand acres would not be without influence on the state of the atmosphere.

I rode for hours together over forest tracts whose luxuriant growth, of trees had been destroyed so recently that there was still a very unpleasant sultry heat proceeding from the ground, which was indeed sometimes so hot that one of my guides, who was walking, had to put sandals on his hitherto naked feet to protect them from burning. In the tropical highlands travelling in the neighbourhood of burning woods is not so dangerous as in the grassy plains of the Upper Mississippi, where the fire finds nothing to check its course, but rushes on with the rapidity of lightning over enormous tracts. The mountainous character of the country, as well as the extraordinarily luxuriant vegetation in Central America, place some obstacles in the way of this terrific element; but even there it is not always

possible to determine the exact limit of the fire. The most precious ornamental and dye-woods are cut down and carried away before the rest of the vegetation is devoted to the flames; and the first rains, which fall towards the end of April or the beginning of May,—the commencement of the wet season,—soon extinguish the fires. Maize is then sown on the ground, and a few months afterwards the rich soil is covered by its gigantic cobs.

In the afternoon we reached Proteccion, a small clearing in the midst of the pine woods with eight or ten wooden cottages, which were, however, with the exception of two, empty and abandoned. Even these two families intended to leave the place, since they found the labour of wood-cutting on the mountains very severe, the payment extremely small, and the soil so sandy as to be little adapted to cultivation. These poor settlers, who had themselves neither bread nor beans, received us in a friendly manner, and willingly sold us some of the rice, brown sugar, and fruit, which was all they possessed; and I here found confirmed the observation that I had made before, that you mostly meet with a better reception from the poorer inhabitants than from the opulent proprietors of haciendas, and

also have a more moderate price to pay for what you consume. Late in the evening there arrived some more wayfarers, with loads on their backs, who also sought a shelter for the night. They were carrying about for sale a quantity of wooden carved crucifixes, and they offered some to our host; but he was either too poor or not sufficiently pious to avail himself of the opportunity; though I saw subsequently that the wandering family paid their little reckoning with one of these holy articles of traffic.

In this wood-cutter's cottage at least ten persons passed the night. To me had been assigned the place of honour, on a hard, narrow, wooden bench along the wall; and the rest of the company lay about where they could. This was all very well as long as it was light; but as night came on, when the door was closed and fastened, and the interior pitch dark, it was by no means comfortable. As so near to the equator it is dark at seven o'clock in the evening, the people lay awake for hours on their respective couches, and endeavoured to pass away the time by gossiping about one trifle or another; for they seldom have any candles, and can at most only make a little light by kindling a piece of pine wood.

Time appears to be of no great value on these mountains; for early as the people had gone to bed, they were in no particular hurry to rise in the morning; and it was nearly six when the first sleeper crawled out from under his linen coverlet, and began rubbing his eyes. Clocks, such as we find in the cottages of the poorest peasants in the Black Forest, are, as I have said, not to be met with in the whole country, and would be, perhaps, of no great use to the people here, as they do scarcely anything. They reckon time only by the sun and the crowing of their cocks; and if you ask a native at what time you will reach this or that place, he raises his brown finger, and, pointing to a certain spot in the heavens, says, "When the sun gets to *there*." Of course this way of reckoning leaves considerable doubt of the precise point indicated, and only affords a very general notion of the time of day.

On the 4th of April I noted down in my journal the first fall in the barometer; it had not rained before since the 29th of December; but now the fires in the woods and on the savannahs began to be extinguished, and all nature to give tokens of freshness and revival. I used to go out early and ramble about to

collect plants, and then on my return dry them carefully on paper; in which occupation I was always attended by a crowd of curious lookers-on. Many pretty flowers that I gathered were quite unknown to these people, though they had lived among them all their lives; but they are not interested in them unless they are of direct use, or likely to damage themselves: with such as these, however, they are well acquainted, as well as with the modes of life of poisonous or otherwise dangerous animals. When I showed my host my herbarium he looked quite surprised, and said, that, though he had grown old in the woods, he knew very few of these plants; but added, "Ah! the forest is a regular doctor's shop for those who know how to use it."

We rode out of Proteccion at seven o'clock in the morning, and after traversing some mountain passes, arrived in the charming valley of Comayagua, in the centre of which lies the town of the same name. It was four o'clock in the afternoon; and during this long ride we had passed but a single settlement, namely, San Antonio, a place of about 3000 inhabitants, who live by farming and cattle-breeding. As I was the bearer of a letter from the then ambassador

of Costa Rica in Washington, to the President of the republic, I desired to be shown at once to his house, and, without alighting from my mule, delivered my letter to an officer on guard. The President-General Cabanas happened to be absent, and I was therefore shown to a house belonging to the government where strangers were accustomed to alight, and where was lodged just then Don José Maria Barrundia, the lately appointed plenipotentiary for Honduras to the United States. I had during my stay in Tegucigalpa become acquainted with this venerable old gentleman, — one of the most high-minded as well as cultivated men of Central America, — and had passed many most agreeable hours in his company, so that I regarded this unexpected meeting as a signal piece of good fortune. I had been warned beforehand of the discomforts and privations to which strangers were exposed in this capital of Honduras, where the scarcity of provisions is sometimes so great that you literally have to suffer hunger, — an unpleasant state of things which is in some measure to be attributed to the circumstance of the town being principally inhabited by government officials. Agriculture in the immediate environs is in a

very low state, and provisions have to be brought from neighbouring villages; and at this time, when there had been, in consequence of the visitation of locusts, two bad harvests in succession, most of the corn had to be imported from the North.

Very few strangers come to this town, as there is small inducement for them to do so; and, with the exception of the mercantile firms in the seaports, there are, perhaps, not more than seven or eight foreign families in the whole country. In many parts of the interior no son of the North has ever set his foot; and any one who did happen to find his way there would be looked upon as a kind of wonderful animal.

I occupied a little paved room on the ground floor, whose entire furniture consisted of a hanging mat, which I had brought with me. My food was supplied from the President's kitchen, —not without payment,— and eatables were so scanty even there that the head of the state himself often had to do without such things as eggs, white bread, and so forth. I mention these matters to show in what a deplorable state things must still be in this country, when the

chief officer of the republic cannot avoid such petty personal discomforts.

On the evening after my arrival I had the honour of a visit from the President, who is small in stature, but with lively blue eyes and finely cut features, which, as well as his fair complexion, speak plainly enough of his Castilian origin. He wears an imposingly large moustache, somewhat out of proportion to his small figure, but probably, it is supposed, to give him a martial appearance; and he certainly looks much better on horseback than on foot. When he came to me, Cabanas was in plain clothes, as it is customary here for officers to wear the military uniform only on active service. I had kindled for his reception a single wax candle, which, not having a candlestick at my disposal, I had stuck, with elegant simplicity, in the neck of an empty bottle, — a kind of candelabra much in favour in Paris, among the students of the university.

But the conversation was lively enough, if the aspect of the apartment was not. Don José Barrundia was also of the party; and Cabanas, who is devotedly attached to his country, for whose freedom and independence he has more

than once perilled his life, expatiated long and earnestly upon its future prospects.

Honduras was formerly the chief seat of the federalists, and as such the focus of all the civil wars and revolutions which have devastated this beautiful country more cruelly than fevers, earthquakes, or locusts. Its population has rather diminished than increased, its trade and agriculture are prostrate, its finances are exhausted, and its treasury is empty; so that it is no wonder if people are inclined to turn for help even to those Yankees whose love of money and of "annexation" has brought them elsewhere into such evil repute. Even General Cabanas was inclined to place confidence in the Americans, in the hope that they might enable him to develop the natural resources of his country and promote its prosperity.

He was just then carrying on a negotiation with an American company for the construction of the railroad from Puerta Caballos to the Gulf of Fonseca, of which I have spoken; and the project now occupied the minds of the whole nation, and was the chief occasion of the mission of Don José Barrundia, who was commissioned to endeavour to obtain for it the sanction of the

Washington government. The people of Honduras, ignorant and dull of thought as they are, could not fail to perceive something of the benefit of such an undertaking; though there were, nevertheless, men to be found who were not ashamed to oppose it, from a feeling of petty envy of the advantages that it might bring to foreigners. They seemed to forget that, considerable as were the tracts of land that the government was to grant to the company, they were now uninhabited, uncultivated wildernesses; and that the state would be compensated a hundredfold by the increased value of what they retained. This proposed railroad formed the chief subject of my conversation with General Cabanas, as, indeed, it did then of all conversations held among educated people, both in Comayagua and Tegucigalpa. The President was a zealous partisan of Morazan's, and is very favourably disposed to foreigners, especially to the Americans and their institutions; and he has, therefore, exerted all his influence to get this railroad treaty ratified by the Chamber of Representatives, which was then sitting at Comayagua. The more mournful and desolate was the state of public affairs at that time, the more eagerly did he turn for consolation

to a brighter future, and endeavour to view it in the most splendid light. The American company was willing to make a loan of 100,000 dollars, to convert the present almost exclusively copper currency into a gold and silver one; and it was also with the help of American money that the small army of Honduras was to be reorganised, arms and munitions of war being furnished by the United States. It was easy to see that the company desired to make the state and the government as dependent upon them as possible, in order to secure the success of the undertaking; and they had stipulated that the 6000 workmen who were to make the railroad should all be armed, in order, it was stated, to repel any attack that might be made upon the rights of the company. The Yankees, it will be seen, had their eyes open: but General Cabanas made no objection to any of these stipulations; he seemed to place the most boundless confidence in the directors of the company, and trusted that, while by the execution of this gigantic project he should be most effectually forwarding the interests of his country, he should also be taking the best means of securing to himself the future presidency of what would hereafter be a flourish-

ing republic. We separated after several hours' talk, in which we had freely indulged in these glorious anticipations; and I trust the President had, at least during that night, the benefit of pleasant dreams; but, alas! these dreams have not yet passed into waking reality.

CHAP. XVIII.

CONCEPCION DE COMAYAGUA.

The President's Audience Chamber.—Frequent Changes in the Government.—The Constitution.—Share of the Clergy in the political Movements.—Proposal by a Catholic Bishop for the Marriage of Priests, and the Legitimation of their Children.—Prospects for Protestant Settlers.—University and School Instruction.—Constituents of the Population.—State Budget.—Military Force Finances.—North American Speculators.—Friends in Need.—Don José Barrundia, and his Last Mission.

Although Comayagua is one of the oldest settlements in the country, and the valley in which it is situated is of splendid fertility, it has never made any great progress in prosperity. Settlers seem mostly to have preferred the higher, cooler, and more healthy districts of the elevated plain of Tegucigalpa; and of late years, in consequence of the perpetual political contests, Comayagua has rapidly declined. The number of inhabitants has sunk since 1827 from 5000 to 2000; and these

mostly belong to the official or military class, or are in some way the immediate dependants of the government. The whole town has a deplorable appearance; the houses are but one story high, and very dilapidated, and neither the public buildings nor the residence of the President are in any better repair. His reception-room was a perfectly empty space, with whitewashed walls; and, whenever a visitor came, a chair had to be fetched from the neighbouring apartment. No less modest in its style of equipment was the private cabinet of General Cabanas, which looked more like an old armoury than the business apartment of the head of the state. The floor was of red brick, the walls were naked and dirty; in each corner were a few old rusty, useless-looking weapons, and some wooden chairs far advanced in age and infirmity. The only article that indicated at all the character of the apartment was a large table, on which lay a chaotic heap of papers. Everything had a hasty, provisional appearance, as if the government itself had no confidence in its duration, and was constantly holding itself in readiness for flight,—a feeling very excusable when we consider that within the thirty years that have elapsed since

its separation from Spain, Honduras has changed the head of its government no less than four and twenty times, so that on an average the reign of each President did not last more than a year and a half. Honduras, "among the faithless only faithful found," was the last to give up the hope of establishing the federal system; and even as much as ten years after the dissolution of the federal republic, she made repeated attempts to form a union with the more liberal states of Nicaragua and San Salvador; it was not till the last hope of such a union had vanished, that she constituted herself an independent republic, bearing the device of "Libre, Soberano, Independiente" on her shield, and also putting it in practice in her actions. Her constitution, established in 1848, breathes throughout a genuine republican spirit; but it is unfortunately too closely imitated from French and North American models to be altogether adapted to the country and the people it is intended for.

It may be admired as an enthusiastic expression of generous feeling on the part of a few liberal men, who, in their chivalrous ardour for liberty, forgot the peculiar circumstances of

their native country and the real wants of their fellow-citizens; but such a charter can be of little practical utility to a country in such an entirely primitive condition.

It is a curious reflection, certainly, to a European that these half-barbarous states do actually contrive to live under republican institutions, whilst one of the most refined and cultivated nations of Europe could retain the blessing of freedom only for so short a time, and during that brief period made so unworthy a use of it! But the liberty of the press may, it is true, more easily subsist in a country where scarcely the fifth part of the inhabitants can read, than where every other man you meet is an author; and the reins of government are less difficult to hold where only a few are striving for rank and distinction, the great mass of the population goes barefoot, and asks no higher felicity than an unlimited enjoyment of beans, maize, and fruit. Political and social relations are less complicated where equality means equality of poverty, than where covetousness and ambition, economy and extravagance, are producing continual changes, and where the distinctions of different classes of society are as strongly defined as the vege-

tation of the different zones on the Cordillera of Central America.

As the constitution of Honduras will probably have undergone essential modifications before these pages meet the eye of the reader, I shall content myself with noticing a few of its principal provisions.

A foreigner becomes naturalised by acquiring landed property of a certain value, by four years' residence in the country, or by a marriage with the daughter of a citizen; he is then bound to pay the same taxes, and he enjoys the same privileges, as a native. The government is a popular representative one, consisting of a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies for the legislative, and a President and his ministers for the executive, power. According to the words of the constitution, every 15,000 persons are to elect a deputy; but, in the absence of a census, each of the seven departments chooses a senator and two deputies, of which latter the half retires every year, and is replaced by newly elected members. The state recognises in the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church alone the right of public worship; but it is decreed that no law shall prevent the private exercise of other forms

of religion, or interfere with the most perfect freedom of faith and conscience. It would be unjust to accuse the government of Honduras of bigotry and intolerance, on account of its having raised the Roman Catholic Church to the dignity of a state religion, since the chief cause of this preference is to be found in the fact of Honduras being a purely Catholic country; for it is only within the last twenty years that even a few Protestants have settled in it. The clergy of Honduras is rude and ignorant in the extreme, but by no means disposed to intolerance. In the course of the various political struggles, a great number of them raised the banner of the liberal party, and even promulgated liberal doctrines from the pulpit. A certain Father Vitéri once even came into church with a sword by his side, and called on his congregation to fight for the cause of freedom; and quite lately, in April, 1856, Father Vigil, priest of the church *de la Merced* in Granada, was sent by the Democrats of Nicaragua to the United States, to obtain the recognition by the Cabinet of Washington of the government established by General Walker.

In May, 1830, there was a law passed by the legislative assembly of Honduras, to permit the

marriages of secular priests, and to declare that the children of ecclesiastics should inherit in the same manner as the children of any other wedlock; and this law was the more remarkable from the circumstance that it was proposed by a bishop, who sat as a deputy in the Chamber.

The various edicts which Morazan's administration issued against the clergy, without feeling itselfat all damaged by the thunders of papal excommunication launched against it in consequence, tended much to lessen the authority of the Catholic priests, and their influence over the hearts and purses of the people has since then greatly declined. In Honduras, Nicaragua, San Salvador, and Costa Rica, the clergy is no longer a power; and it is only in Guatemala that the Hydra is beginning once more to raise its head in the persons of the Jesuits. I cannot, however, agree with Mr. Squier in thinking that many of what are called Rationalists, or Freethinkers, exist in Central America, since rationalism supposes certain conditions not yet to be found there, and is the result of experience and studies of which the people of these countries know nothing.

The whole clergy of the country consists of sixty-six secular priests, with one bishop, the Bishop of Comayagua, at their head. He is th

only prelate, and his see was vacant for many years, but was again filled in 1854 by the appointment of Señor Don Hippolites Caseano Flores.

The Church of Honduras possesses no legal revenue in the form of tithes, &c.; but, with the exception of some trifling assistance from the state, is supported entirely by voluntary contributions. Its income is, therefore, extremely limited, and this is doubtless in part the cause of the subordinate position it holds.

The number of Protestants is so small, and they are so scattered, that they do not either possess schools, or assemble for the purposes of public worship; but if their numbers were sufficient for these purposes, I do not believe they would meet with any kind of opposition from the government or people of Honduras. During my stay in Costa Rica, where there are the greatest number of Protestant families, — namely, about five and twenty,—a plan was talked of, for the erection of an Evangelical meeting-house (the first in Central America), and for sending for a clergyman from England, who should at the same time act as schoolmaster for the children. But the project, although zealously supported by Mr. George Schedel, the English Vice-Consul, failed, partly

from the disproportion of the expense of the proposed institutions to the very limited means of the members of the congregation; and partly from the impossibility of coming to an agreement as to what particular species of clergyman—Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian—the new spiritual pastor and master should be. The plan is, however, only deferred, not abandoned, and with the increase of Protestant immigrants will in all probability be carried into execution.

Every native of Honduras who has attained the age of twenty-one, and does not fall under any of the exceptional cases specially pointed out, is to enjoy the elective franchise; but after the year 1870, the privilege is to be confined to those who can read and write. Every senator must be thirty years of age, and possessed of at least a thousand dollars in landed property, or be entitled to exercise one of the liberal professions; three out of the seven senators retire yearly, and are replaced by new elections. A deputy must be at least twenty-five years old, and a citizen of the province that elects him; and also be either the owner of land to the value of five hundred dollars, or have some profession that brings him an income of that amount.

The legislative assembly levies the taxes and regulates the annual budget, appoints the officers of the chief courts of justice, makes war or peace, and exercises control over the system of public education; it also ratifies treaties, and has the right of bringing accusations against the executive power, and subjecting its conduct to a judicial examination.

The President must be a native of Central America, and five years resident in the state; not under thirty-two years of age, and possessed of landed property to the amount of five thousand dollars. The term of his office is four years, and he cannot properly be elected for two successive terms. He appoints his own ministers, has the right of the veto, and is assisted by a Council; but this is seldom called together except in case of pressing business arising during the legislative vacation. The judicial power consists of a Court, of which three judges sit in Comayagua, and three in Tegucigalpa; and to be eligible to this office they must be advocates of known character, not under twenty-five years of age, and with property in land of the value of one thousand dollars. All persons accused of any offence must be examined within

forty-eight hours, and their liberation or further detention decided within twenty-four hours more. *The punishment of death is abolished.*

A chief officer, bearing the title of a *Jefe Politico*, is appointed by the President for every department, to watch over the administration of justice within it, and to transact business on its behalf with the central government; and there is a provision, curiously indicative of the state of the country, that every municipal officer must be able to read and write.

Honduras possesses ostensibly two universities; one in Comayagua, and the other in Tegucigalpa; but most of the professional chairs are vacant, and the sons of opulent parents more frequently attend the university of Guatemala, — which is the best to be found here, — or they go to some foreign one. According to an official statement made to me, there are, in the whole state, 197 public schools, with an average attendance of 25 pupils each; so that not more than 5000 out of a population of 350,000, or 1 in 70, enjoys the benefit of instruction. This also is merely on the Lancasterian method, and is limited to reading, writing, and arithmetic; or sometimes, on account of the cost of writing materials, to

reading only. Of libraries there is a dreadful scarcity; in fact, there is only one in the whole state, namely, that in the capital, and that is far more remarkable for what it has not than for what it has. Not even the principal Spanish authors were to be found in it when I was there, and of late years not a single work of any consequence has been added to it.

In the uncertainty of public affairs, and the provisional state in which all things have been for a long time, I found it impossible, even at the seat of government, to procure any statistical statements of the number of inhabitants, the yearly births and deaths, the productions of the country, or the receipts and expenditure of the government; and such data as with much trouble I managed to procure, must therefore only be regarded as approximations.

The total number of the population appears to have decreased in consequence of the perpetual disturbances, which have induced a considerable emigration to the neighbouring states, and one half of the inhabitants of Honduras are now full-blood Indians; the other half consisting of a mixture of the White, Indian, and Negro races. Mulattoes are numerous, and there are scarcely any pure

white families in the country, for the old Spanish settlers intermarried freely with the natives; but the shades of colour produced by the multifarious crossings are so complicated that any distinct classification of races is scarcely possible, though the people have hit upon some peculiar expressions for some of these cases. Where the mixture is such that it is impossible to say whether the negro or the Indian type predominates, they say it is a "*no l'entiende*" (I don't understand you); and when a younger child shows a darker complexion than the elder, they call it "a jump backwards."

The word Ladino is applied only to the descendants of the whites and Indians; and these usually live together in villages, and devote themselves to mining and agriculture. Perfectly wild nomadic races are not now to be found in Honduras, but in no one of the five states is the negro type so common. This circumstance is accounted for by the fact of a slave ship having been wrecked near Cape Gracias in 1685, on which occasion the involuntary passengers saved themselves on shore; and though at first attacked by the Indians, were subsequently reconciled to, and even mingled with, them. At a subsequent period also this

Ethiopian element received an addition from fugitive slaves, who, escaping from their masters in the Spanish settlements, took refuge in the forest wildernesses of the east coast; and at the beginning of the last century many planters from Jamaica settled with their slaves on the eastern coast of Honduras, and increased still further the black population. As the offspring of whites and negroes are called Mulattoes, those of negroes and Indians have received the name of Sambos; and the present inhabitants of the Mosquito Coast are almost entirely of this race. They do not amount to more than 5000 or 6000, and live, or are supposed to live, under the sceptre of a certain puppet king, chartered for them by the English, on what is called the Mosquito Territory, — a tract of country of which Governor Trelawney obtained the cession from the Sambo chief, by some clever diplomatic trick, as early as 1740.

Although Great Britain never attempted to assert its rights over the Mosquito Coast as long as it remained an integral part of the Spanish dominions, a favourable opportunity was only wanting to awaken in her a desire for influence and possession on the Central American territory;

and this occasion was offered when the Five Provinces of Spain were separated from the mother country and declared independent republics. Weakened as they were with dissension, the States had not power to resist the unwelcome intrusion, and suffered what they could not prevent; and this state of affairs produced at length the celebrated Clayton-Bulwer treaty, which, like so many other diplomatic documents, complicated the question instead of solving it. The matter will, however, probably be soon decided, and the events which have recently taken place on the Central American continent will most likely bring the affair to a speedy conclusion.

The revenues of the state of Honduras consist principally in the duties on imports, and the monopoly of brandy, gunpowder, tobacco, and stamps. In 1854 the total receipts were, according to the statement furnished me, 581,005¾ dollars, and the expenditure 578,269½; but in the two subsequent years the war and the locusts must have produced a great change in the relative proportions of these figures.

The salaries of the officers of government are extremely small, as may be supposed when it appears that the first magistrate of the republic

only receives 2500 dollars a year. The greater part of the revenue is absorbed by the payment of the interest of the old national debt, amounting to several millions of piastres; a portion is devoted to the increase and improvement of the means of communication; and another, alas! to carrying on the unhappy party strife with the neighbour republic of Guatemala.

The standing army of Honduras does not exceed 1500 men, wholly infantry and artillery; as the nature of the country does not admit the use of cavalry. During the last war with Guatemala there were 2500 men under arms, but not more than 1000 really efficient soldiers; and the force of the enemy was no greater; in fact, during the whole of the struggles of the last thirty years the number of troops brought into the field by any one state never exceeded 3000. The Hondurans, like the men of the other Central American republics, are by no means good soldiers, and will sometimes abandon their homes, and hide themselves for months in the woods, to escape military duty. The dread of this, and also of fresh taxes, is indeed a principal cause of the great difficulty of obtaining a correct census of the population; for no sooner does a government

officer make his appearance in a settlement, than the male part of the inhabitants disappear with all possible speed, having no notion of any reason the government can have for wishing to know their numbers, unless it either intends to impose new taxes on them, or take them for soldiers. These are the ideas of the purposes of government that have been left them by their Spanish rulers.

A Honduran soldier generally goes barefoot, and his whole uniform consists of a pair of linen trousers, a short white or blue jacket, and a straw or pasteboard hat; and, if it were not for his musket and cartridge box, one would certainly never guess his martial profession. They are hardy fellows, however, and will make day-marches of from twenty-four to thirty miles. The officers are somewhat more respectable in appearance, — having a kind of uniform, and *not* going barefoot; most of them, indeed, are mounted, but still their appearance is very far from our European notions of a military officer.

One of the greatest causes of trouble to Honduras is the shattered state of its finances; and the poverty of the people will not admit of much direct taxation. In the other states silver and

gold serve as the media of exchange; but in most of the departments of Honduras there is only a copper currency, and even this is constantly falling in value, as, since 1839, there has been no legal limitation to the issues. The only exception to this rule is found in the departments of Gracias and Yoro, where English and North American money is in circulation, as well as some of the old federal coinage and irregularly cut angular silver pieces, which date from the time of the viceroyalty. Both these provinces, like the Italian states of the Austrian empire, obstinately refuse to take any other representative of value than silver and gold; and by this energetic resistance they have now for seventeen years kept their country free from the copper plague.

For a pound sterling, which passes in commerce for five piastres, I received seventy piastres in copper; and, as things have not at all improved since then, the disproportion would now be probably still greater. All prospects of amendment seem to depend upon the influence that North America may acquire in the country, and on the construction of the railways before mentioned.

The Peace of Paris (of 1856) has not been without effect here, and the more tranquil aspect of European affairs has rendered English as well as American capitalists less unwilling to take part in these great undertakings; indeed, the zealous and meritorious exertions of Mr. Squier to raise some of the necessary capital in London have been crowned with the most signal success, so that there can now be scarcely a doubt of the project being carried into effect.

With respect to some obstacles that were supposed to exist in the nature of the ground, they appear to be entirely imaginary; and I have, myself, the fullest conviction that the work is not only possible, but easy of execution; but I may refer those who may wish for further information on the subject to the excellent explanatory pamphlet published by Mr. Squier.*

Honduras has suffered a heavy loss in the death of the noble-minded Don José Barrundia, who unfortunately died a few months after his arrival at Washington. Although in feeble

* Honduras Inter-Oceanic Railway, Preliminary Report, by E. G. Squier, New York, 1854. Supplementary Report, London, 1856; also to Notes on Central America, by E. G. Squier, New York, 1856, p. 235.

health and nearly eighty years of age, his heart still glowed with the most fervent love for his country, and he joyfully undertook the mission from which he anticipated such happy consequences, both to Honduras and Central America in general.

No one has yet been found able and willing to take up the negotiations interrupted by his death ; but the construction of the Inter-Oceanic Railway will probably contribute, more than all the diplomatic intercourse that could be established, to knit the long-desired bond between the two republics, and gradually open the primeval forests of Honduras to those free institutions for which Barrundia struggled through his whole life, and whose final triumph he had hoped to secure by the mission that proved to be his last effort in his country's cause.

CHAP. XIX.

Society in Comayagua.—Botanical Excursions.—A Remedy for Cholera.—New Arrivals.—Companions on the Road.—Las Piedras; or, Villa de la Paz.—Don Manuel Escobar.—The Priest of Las Piedras and his Mule.—The Hunger Root.—Price of Provisions.—German and English Consuls.—Incasapa.—Melancholy Prospects.—Intibucat.—Good Friday Procession.—Don Simon Gomez.—Indians attempt to obstruct our Progress.—The Hacienda of San José.

The society of Comayagua, as far as I had the means of observing it, certainly does not appear to possess any attraction. There are very few opulent families; and they live in a very parsimonious manner, and are far from being as hospitably disposed as those of Tegucigalpa; I may state, however, to the honour of the capital, that it possesses two pianos, the first ever seen there having arrived about a year ago; but unfortunately players are still wanting.

Finding little inducement to remain in the town, I used to make long excursions in all directions through the valley, and seldom returned without a very remunerative amount of botanical plunder, although the end of the dry season is a very unfavourable time for making a collection of this kind. During these rambles I frequently saw a shrub with a small red berry, called by the natives *Guataca*, or sometimes *Conuda de Culebras*, the root of which is said to be a specific against the cholera. I took some roots home for examination, though I did not place much trust in the information of the Indians concerning its valuable qualities, as they are excessively credulous in such matters; but on inquiry I did hear of, at least, this fact in support of their assertion, confirmed by various testimonies :—

At the time of the first cholera epidemic in Honduras, in the year 1837, the people of the village of Cantaranas, about six-and-thirty miles from Tegucigalpa, first made use of this root; and in this village the disease was extremely mild, though it raged fearfully all around it. It was used simply as a decoction, drank by the patient at very brief intervals, and it is said speedily to

have manifested a powerfully astringent property.*

A few days before my intended departure from Comayagua some strangers arrived who had great difficulty in procuring a lodging. One of them was an Englishman, who appeared to have seen a great many vicissitudes, and who was now proposing to settle as a physician in the port of Omoa. What should a poor man do when he is at his wits' end but turn doctor? This gentleman could play the piano indeed, and take daguerreotype portraits; but Honduras seemed to be now too poor to afford him much encouragement in either department, so, as a last resource, he meant to devote his talents to medicine. With us, in Germany, when a man is desperately out at elbows he turns newspaper editor. The climate of Omoa is not as bad as it is represented; but it does, nevertheless, afford a

* This plant, of which I brought some specimens back with me to Vienna, has since been more carefully examined by Professor Fenzl, the Director of the Imperial Botanical Museum, and he declares it to be one of the *Rauwolfia tomentosa, Jaq.* This would make a further investigation of its properties very interesting, as most plants of the Apocyannu family manifest the very opposite quality, being rather solvent than astringent.

good deal of encouragement to doctors and grave-diggers, so let us hope the versatile genius of this brave Briton met its due reward.

The second new arrival was a Brunswicker, a *blasé*, sickly-looking young man, who had an unfortunate propensity to look on the shady side of things; and in his lamentations for what one must learn to do without in tropical countries, quite forgot the many enjoyments they offer. He intended, after seeing a little more of them, to return with as much speed as possible to the land of civilisation and Brunswick sausages; but hearing that I was about to visit the ruins of Copan, which have become so renowned by the attractive description of Stephens, he begged permission to join me, to which, as he was a good-natured, harmless fellow enough, I willingly agreed.

Every addition to a party increases indeed the difficulty of getting on in these regions; but, on the other hand, it holds out a prospect of mutual assistance and protection not to be despised in these lonely forests.

We left the capital of Honduras on the 10th of April, but could not get as many mules as we required, on account of the prevailing scarcity of fodder; a scarcity which occurs regularly

every year, towards the end of the dry season, for the inhabitants never have the foresight to lay in a sufficient quantity. The kindness of Mr. Edwards, however, helped us out of this difficulty, as he lent us his horses to the next settlement, where, as the people live by farming and the transport of goods, he thought we were likely to find cattle and fodder more plentiful. General Cabanas offered to escort us a part of the way; but we were obliged to decline the honour, as we wished to set off before daybreak. After all, however, we did not get away very soon, for one of our attendants wished to hear mass first, and the other had not bid good-bye to his grandmother; so that by the time we had crossed the magnificent but shadowless plain of Comayagua, twelve miles broad, to the village of Las Piedras, or Villa de la Paz, at the other end of the valley, the sun was high above the horizon.

At so short a distance from the seat of government, the President's letter still had some effect; and the commandant of the place, Don Manuel Escobar, who occupied a sort of barrack with a few hundred men, now resting from the fatigues of the last campaign, came to wait upon us, and offer his services for the continuation of our journey.

The most needful service he could render us was his assistance in hiring mules; but it turned out to be the spiritual pastor of Las Piedras who helped us out of this temporal difficulty. Most of the mules of the place were, it appeared, at present on journeys, or sent to distant pastures, so that they could not be had for several days; and thereupon General Escobar bethought himself to introduce us to the priest, as the padre not only possessed a pair of excellent mules himself, but had probably influence enough to obtain others from his absolution-needing flock, even where the political authorities might fail.

The only obstacle was, that the priest had scruples about letting out his mules in Passion Week, which is kept rather strictly in Honduras. During the last three days there is a stop to every kind of trade, and the magistrates employ themselves wholly with prayer and penance in the churches, leaving their worldly business to a few deputies of inferior rank, who have orders to stop all travellers, however peacefully they may be pursuing their way, and compel them to keep the Easter holy.

I soon perceived, however, from the hesitating speeches of the padre, that he meant to turn his

religious scruples to profit, by making them the pretext for asking the highest possible price for his mules. He seemed to think that, if he did commit a sin, he might as well be handsomely paid for it; and as I perceived this weakness, our negotiation went on briskly. For the hire of four mules as far as Intibucat, a two days' journey, I agreed to pay him twenty piastres in gold (above 4*l.* sterling), and also to feed the animals and their driver; but then I was to enjoy the honour of riding on the padre's own mule.

Our departure was fixed for the following morning; and I employed the afternoon in making some excursions, on which several of the principal people of the place had the goodness to accompany me. In this settlement, as in all others that I have seen in which the inhabitants were chiefly occupied in the cultivation of the soil, there was far more appearance of comfort and prosperity than where they were exclusively devoted to mining. The locust visitation, which generally occurs every thirty or forty years, and whose effects are felt for three or four seasons afterwards, had certainly done great damage, but had not caused such distress as in the mining districts; and its effect was mostly perceptible only in a general rise in

the prices of the necessaries of life, and to this people had to submit; but there was at least no fear of famine, as there was in many provinces, where for months the inhabitants of whole villages had to live on wild fruit and roots. In the province of Intigalpa, in Guatemala, great numbers of people subsisted, in the summer of 1854, on a farinaceous root hitherto unknown in Europe.*

Fortunately distress of this kind cannot last long in these exuberantly fertile regions, for every three or four months there comes a fresh harvest of Indian corn. It would probably not occur at all if the Indians had a little more foresight, and would sow rather more than what they think will just serve them till next harvest.

I noted down in my journal a few of what were considered at Las Piedras as the altogether exceptional prices of this period of scarcity, as they may serve to indicate what they must be in

* Dr. Fenzl, the Professor of Botany at the Imperial Botanical Gardens at Vienna, to whom I brought a specimen, has called it, on account of its use on this occasion, the *Helmia esurientium*. It has much resemblance to other tropical *tubers*, such as the yucca (*Jatropha manihot*), the yam, &c., and has also a similar flavour.

ordinary times. For one *medida* (25 lbs.) of maize, a dollar and a quarter was charged; the same measure of wheat cost one dollar; 1 lb. of coffee, a real; 1 lb. of refined sugar, two reals; 30 oranges, half a real; a fowl, half a dollar; 7 manos (35) potatoes, half a real; 100 bananas, one real; a cow, eight dollars; an ox, ten; a saddle horse, from fifty to eighty; and a mule for riding, from seventy to one hundred, &c., &c.

The little river that flows through Las Piedras is turned to good account by the inhabitants of the village. In the morning they bathe in it; in the afternoon it serves as a grand washing-tub for clothes; and in the evening they fill from it the earthen vessels in which they keep the water for drinking, though, considering the various purposes to which the stream is applied, the water does not seem altogether tempting for the latter uses.

I set out to continue my journey on the morning of the 11th of April, in company with the young Brunswicker, and attended by two servants, and we directed our course towards the elevated plains of Llanos de Gracias, to reach which we had some considerable mountain ranges to climb. At the highest point we attained, the thermometer marked 79° Fahr., and the ane-

roid barometer $23\frac{5}{40}$. We rode the whole day through pine and oak woods; and, at the height at which we found ourselves, the vegetation had a completely Northern character. My travelling companion was by no means talkative, but jogged on without making a single remark or troubling himself at all about the remainder of the party. All the while he was passing through these gigantic forests of the Cordilleras he seemed to find nothing to attract his attention or withdraw it from the home comforts with the thoughts of which he was constantly occupied. He was apparently a young gentleman in prosperous circumstances, and unluckily his fancy was continually presenting to him the agreeableness of a well-furnished table, and all the enjoyments and indulgences that money can command in an old country; and the more he dwelt on these delights, the less he liked our frugal meals of maize and beans, and our bed on the bare ground in the forest.

One of our servants, a talkative mulatto, named Apoleonario, had kept near me the whole day, and lost no opportunity of questioning me about the people from the North, "who live over the sea there, and, they say, are going to

conquer Central America, and take it for their own." The priest had told him that they were very cruel, had no religion, and would lay waste the beautiful country and make the inhabitants slaves. Apoleonario confessed that I was the first foreigner he had ever spoken to, though he had seen several; and that he had had quite a different idea of foreigners from the descriptions of the padre, and from what was said of them among the people. I endeavoured to tranquillise Apoleonario concerning the cruelty of the "*Americanos del Norte*," and to make intelligible to him, as far as his capacity would permit, the advantages that might accrue to the country and its inhabitants by a great foreign immigration, the construction of a railroad, and even an intimate union with the sister republic. Of course I spoke only of material advantages,—greater facility of intercourse, better cultivation of the ground, increase of trade, and the introduction of capital. I told him there would be no more civil wars, no more scarcity of food, and no more copper money, as soon as the "people from the North" had gained a footing in the country. My explanations were eagerly listened to. "*Que vienen!*"—Let them come—ex-

claimed Apoleonario, with a mixture of joy and trepidation, "if only they don't kill us." The other servant expressed his concurrence in the sentiment; and when we stopped at Lepasale, a clearing in the pine woods where we were to pass the night, the people became so well-disposed towards the Yankees, that they declared they wished for nothing more than to see them enter the country in a body.

The unfriendly feelings often entertained here towards foreigners, and especially North Americans, is chiefly to be ascribed to the tricks and frauds of adventurers from all parts of the world, who have come here and imposed on the simplicity of the people. This is a common case, indeed; for the first settlers in uncivilised countries cannot be expected to belong to the most moral and respectable classes of their countrymen, and the squatters of North America are assuredly no exception to this rule. But the natives do not of course know how to make these distinctions; and they lay on a whole nation the faults of a few of its sons. If a German or a North American does anything wrong, his entire country gets into disgrace; and a traveller should therefore recollect that

he has not merely his own character to support, but also that of his countrymen in general, who will bear the blame or receive the honour that may result from his doings. It is much to be desired that governments, too, would bear this in mind, and be rather more careful in their selection of the men they choose to represent them in distant countries. The consul sent to a New Spanish republic appears, not merely as the representative of his government, but of his whole nation; and from his behaviour and mode of action is inferred, often unjustly enough, that of the people to whom he belongs; it is assumed that he must be one of their best men to whom is entrusted such an honourable mission. As far as Germany is concerned, these representatives have been usually very insignificant persons, and the influence as well as the commercial interests of the nation have suffered in consequence; probably the states of Central America have been regarded as too unimportant to demand any particular attention. During my stay in Central America a case occurred in which the accredited agent of a German power was guilty, on various occasions, of conduct that may be

called disgraceful. For example, he once entertained a large dinner-party, in celebration of the birthday of his sovereign, at which he forgot himself so far that he had to be carried to bed by one of his guests, the President of the state and a former Indian chief. Yet he was not recalled, but only removed to another residence. One cannot but suppose that many German governments regard the consular offices in Spanish America in the light of sinecures for individuals whom they wish, for some reason, to favour, and at the same time to get rid of; and the government of Great Britain appears to have seen this error, and to have found means to turn it to its own commercial advantage.

Another common mistake of German governments is that of choosing for their representatives merchants already resident in the place, to whom the whole advantage of the appointment consists in being able to hoist the national flag in case of a revolution, and thus protect their private property and goods from the fury of the populace. In England, people understand that a consul, if he is really to promote the interests of the country by which he is accredited, should be neither a foreigner

nor a man of business, but hold a perfectly independent position in society; otherwise he will be frequently embarrassed in his proceedings by private considerations, and the duties of the consul will often be sacrificed to the profit of the trader. The consular agents of Great Britain are always Englishmen, are allowed to carry on no kind of business, and are suitably paid by their government like other officers; and the honourable and imposing position which Great Britain takes wherever she retains a representative is the most striking proof of the propriety of the system she follows.

On the morning of the second day's journey we came to Jucasapa, a little Indian settlement of about two hundred inhabitants. The landscape through which we had been passing was of a very undulating character; and one of the servants, who had never before left his home in the highlands, remarked very correctly that he thought it must be like the sea.

Towards noon we met the letter-carrier, going from Santa Rosa to the capital. He carried a long knife in his hand, spoke much of the insecurity of the road, and gave it as his opinion that the war, and the other distresses of the country, had of late years greatly increased

the number of thieves. Many cowardly fellows, he said, fled to the woods to escape military service, and, when they found themselves suffering from want, took to robbery. It appeared that such distress had never been known in Central America, as existed at the time when we were travelling through Honduras. The continual recruitings had diminished the always small number of labourers; only a part of the fields had been cultivated, and these had been laid waste by the locusts. The inhabitants of most of the villages had been living on maize and bananas only, without the addition of either rice or beans; and the letter-carrier told us that he had been unable to get anything to eat for three days, and that the government letter to the Alcaldes of the several villages he passed through had only helped him to two tortillas. What scanty amount of provisions the poor people did possess, they were anxious not to part with, even for the highest price, as they did not know how long the distress would last. The fields all looked dry and withered, and the nutritious leaves of the maize and sugar-cane had been entirely gnawed away by the locusts.

All this afforded us a poor prospect for our further journey; but I endeavoured to prevent the doleful communications of the letter-carrier from depressing the spirits of the servants, and put as good a face on the matter as I could. "I am not afraid," said one of them, in reply to my consolatory suggestions; "nobody can die till his time is come." So it appears that even superstition has its advantages.

During the most oppressively sultry hours of the day we found shelter from the burning sun in a neat little log-house near the Savannah Grande; shelter, but nothing more, for the inhabitants had nothing more to give us. I had a very modest repast prepared from the provisions we carried with us, but the countenance of my Brunswick friend visibly lengthened at the sight of it; and the terrible heat, the poor diet, and the discouraging reports of the gossiping letter-carrier, had thrown him into such low spirits, that he lay down in his hanging mat while the coffee and rice were preparing, and as soon as he had swallowed his portion, returned to his former position.

The tired state of our mules and the badness of the roads left us no hope of being able to

reach the town of Intibucat that evening, and we had scarcely passed the wide, desolate, treeless region, called the Savannah Grande, before night came on, and obliged us to come to a halt. We found ourselves just then in the neighbourhood of the Quebiada de Mavilla, a ravine through which flows a small mountain stream that would, we thought, at least enable us to quench our thirst and make some coffee. The mules were then hobbled, and turned into the forest to seek food for themselves; our guides made themselves a bed with the saddles; and the Brunswicker and I slung our hammocks between two pine-trees, and so passed the night.

We reached Intibucat on the following morning,—the morning of Holy Thursday,—and found most of the townspeople celebrating the day in penitential garments, and gazing with much surprise at our small caravan as it moved through the streets. As I had a government letter to the Alcalde of the place, I desired to be conducted to his house. We were afterwards shown to the hall of the Cabildo, which was handsome and spacious enough even to satisfy my travelling companion; and, what was more, we obtained a meal with very little trouble. It is

true that, as it was a fast day, we had to content ourselves with humble fare; but to travellers who had just passed through a country wasted by war and locusts, even this seemed dainty enough. The Alcalde shook his head at the notion of our going on the next day, and thought there would be great difficulty in inducing any of the inhabitants to let us mules on that solemn fast day. I represented to him, however, that the case was urgent; and that, though we would willingly have refrained from continuing our journey during the Holy Week, my companion was obliged to go on in order not to miss the opportunity of getting to the port of Omoa in time for a vessel that was going to the United States.

Thereupon, the Alcalde, who was an obliging and reasonable man, — unlike most Alcaldes, — promised to do his best, and let us know the result before night; and in the meantime we amused ourselves with looking at the place.

It is a pretty clean Indian village or town, with neat houses, indicative of a certain degree of opulence, and a cabildo and church that may be called handsome buildings. The population is about 4000, mostly pure Indians, and employed in agriculture. It is one of the highest

settlements in the state of Honduras, being about 5000 feet above the level of the Pacific; and, as it lies far beyond the region of tropical vegetation, only the productions of the northern zone can be cultivated with advantage. The maize here yields only one harvest, and that not so abundant as at a height of only two or three thousand feet; but other kinds of corn flourish admirably, as well as peaches and apples; and I also saw linseed and some of the European kinds of cabbages in the gardens; but the banana, the yucca, and the yam are no more to be seen. The climate is extremely agreeable, and the air indescribably fresh and exhilarating. In January snow occasionally falls; but it lies only a very short time, passing away with the first beams of the morning sun.

I have seldom seen so many old people anywhere as in this village, and it was the only place on my whole route where I was not teased for medicines. In the year 1837, when the cholera raged fearfully in all the lower settlements, Intibucat entirely escaped this dreadful scourge; but small-pox has more than once committed fearful ravages, the brown inhabitants having a great objection to vaccination.

As one proof of the prosperity of the place, I may mention that there is an annual consumption of 500 head of cattle, mostly cows, of an average weight of from 250 to 300 lbs., which gives about 30 lbs. of meat for each individual, —more than double what is consumed in most of the villages of Honduras.

I had just returned from an excursion to a neighbouring hill which commanded a beautiful panoramic view, when the church bells, which appeared to me scarcely to have left off, began again to summon the people; and old men, and women veiled in long white drapery, were seen moving towards the sacred edifice in obedience to the call.

Some of the young people, however, did not seem very well inclined to leave their play in the square before the church, and had to be drubbed in to their devotions by persons denominated apostles, who, during Passion Week, act as masters of the sacred ceremonies. They carried in their hands long wooden crosses, which they made use of to drive in the refractory members of the flock.

The interior of the church had quite a festive appearance: the floor was strewn with pine-

branches; the bare walls were decorated a great way up with fresh, broad, gigantic banana and palm leaves—a beautiful decoration, which transformed the plain wooden building into a magnificent temple of verdure. Many of the congregation were dressed in white or wrapped in white linen mantles, and bore large heavy wooden crosses. The authorities were in black, full dress, and the Alcalde had the additional distinction of a large brass chain hanging over his breast. After the prayers there was a long procession of the inhabitants through the streets, carrying lighted candles in their hands; and four of the men bearing a wooden image of the Saviour, rudely carved, with dishevelled hair and gay costume; a spectacle that did not seem likely either to improve the taste or elevate the devotion of the people. There was also a richly-dressed image of the Virgin that went staggering along on the shoulders of six young girls in white, and almost all the inhabitants followed the procession; indeed those who did not were reminded pretty roughly of their neglect by the above-named apostolic functionaries. What a contrast between this rude show in the half-heathen Indian village, and the superb, sense-intoxicating pro-

cessions of the Catholic countries of the European continent! And yet they were substantially the same, and differed only in material appliances.

During the procession, which I joined I must own from prudential considerations, a Ladino, or half-Indian, came up to me, and, while the faithful were hymning their pious chants, began to bargain with me concerning the hire of some mules for the journey to Gracias; and before the procession returned to the church the business was concluded. He said it would be necessary for us to set off very early, and avoid certain settlements in order not to be obstructed in our journey by the fanatical inhabitants; but I took my stand on the government letter, on the necessity of my journey, and also on a few bright silver pieces properly applied.

Notwithstanding what he had said about the necessity of setting off early, I found that Simon Gomez shared with all his countrymen the defect of want of punctuality, and we did not leave the town till a much later hour than had been proposed. The people were all up and about, and we met many of the gentlemen with wooden crosses, who barred our way and would

not permit us to commit the sin of travelling on this day unless they were paid for it; one of these "apostles" thought that a piastre was the very least he could take for overlooking such an offence. I could not help thinking what a handsome revenue the Catholic Church might derive from a fine levied on all travellers by railroad or steamboat, who, in the Catholic countries of Europe, are guilty of locomotion on its appointed holidays. It would be more productive than the sale of any other kind of indulgences has ever been.

In the course of the day we were several times stopped and fleeced in a similar manner; indeed I really had some suspicion that my guide had given a hint to some of his friends that there was a good opportunity of turning an honest penny in the name of an offended Church. We rode so slowly that it was no difficult matter for a moderately good pedestrian to overtake us; and as the Indians look as like one another as possible, they might be, for aught I know, the very same "*cruceros*" who, at different distances, closed the path and called on us in the name of religion to "stand, and deliver."

In a long day's journey we did not go more

than eighteen miles; and yet our mules were thoroughly tired, when, about six o'clock in the evening we reached the hacienda of San José. This place belonged to the mule owner, and we met with a tolerably civil reception, and hoped that we had now got over the worst of our difficulties; but it appeared on the following morning that we were mistaken. It had been agreed that our mules were to be placed in an enclosed space, and fed on the maize that we bought for them; but this agreement had been broken; the animals had been turned loose in the forest, and now one of them was not to be found. The guide who was to accompany us was also missing; and Don Simon Gomez recommended us either to put off our journey, or to continue it with four mules, while we had paid him for five. Our servant, he thought, might go on foot.

This was one of the few moments of my life when I should have liked the assistance of a *gendarme*. We were quite in this man's power, for if he chose to refuse us his mules altogether, we had no means of enforcing our rights here in the midst of the deaf woods. A Yankee would, without much scruple, have had recourse to his revolver in such a difficulty; but I must own

this was a plan not at all to my taste, and I preferred keeping my revolver for purposes of defence. My Brunswicker remained as mute all the while as if the affair did not at all concern him, and only gave tongue when he found he had to wait for his breakfast. Other help than in the revolver there was none; so, as the case seemed hardly bad enough for that, I had to submit to the fraud of the deceiver Don Simon, and make the best of it.

When he saw that we were going, and that he had gained his point, he became as amiable and sweet as if we had always been the best friends in the world. This is indeed quite a common case with the natives; but a stranger has really a feeling of shame that not the smallest matter of business can be settled with them without a wrangle.

We had to cross some enormous grassy plains during the most oppressive heat; and the whole day we saw only one poor little hamlet, the inhabitants of which were pure Indians, but spoke nothing but Spanish. They were mostly tall, but attenuated figures, with an expression of countenance that inclined you to keep your hand upon your pocket.

In this place we could get nothing whatever but water, and as we approached the mining districts the distress seemed to be again increasing. At five o'clock we got to a village called Belén, and sought a shelter in the Cabildo. As the Alcalde could not read, I had to make him acquainted with the contents of the letter; and I took care to give with sufficient emphasis some passages in which all civil and military authorities were commanded (of course, on due payment) to furnish me with whatever provisions, cattle, escort, &c., I might require. But, in the melancholy condition of the country, it was not always possible for them to comply with my wishes; and this time, among others, I had to take the will of the Alcalde for the deed. A dark room in the Cabildo was opened for me, and a few earthen pitchers filled with water placed in it; and therewith all the duties of hospitality were supposed to be fulfilled.

Late in the evening a tremendous storm came on, accompanied by such deluges of rain that we thought we should be washed away; and then afterwards, when the storm was over and we had all fallen asleep, we were suddenly awakened by the sound of a shot.

The thought occurred involuntarily that in the obvious distress of the inhabitants, and their great superiority of numerical force, they might be preparing an attack on our little caravan, so I desired my people to be on their guard, and after making a light, took my revolver, and went out to make the round of the wooden hovel where we were lodged. But there was not the slightest sign of any danger, and our cattle were grazing peaceably on the pasture refreshed by the rains.

I thought it advisable, however, for one of the men to mount guard over the mules, as cattle are often stolen. In the morning I was told that many of the inhabitants had heard the shot, but no one could give any explanation of it, and it may possibly have been the signal for some exploit beyond the limits of the settlement.

CHAP. XX.

GRACIAS A DIOS. — TALCUA.

Melancholy Aspect of the Town.—Our Quarters.—Distress. —Excursion to the Environs. — Historical Notices.—Inhabitants. — Earthquakes. — A curious Procession. — A military Escort. — La Flora. — A musical Village. — Ill Report on the Road. — Talcua. — Rio Cospa. — A White more like a Black. — Industry of the People. — Solemn Ride through the Pine Woods. — A Resource in case of Attack. — Arrival at Santa Rosa. — The hospitable Padre. — A good Lodging.

On Easter Sunday morning at twelve o'clock we reached *Gracias à Dios;* and after our long and wearisome ride we could have cordially repeated the fervent expression of the first settlers, from which the town has its name. It must, however, have looked a much more inviting place then than it does now, when the greater part of the town is abandoned and in ruins; for no place in Honduras suffered so much in the war with Guatemala, in the spring of 1853, as this Gracias.

Many families who were living here during

that time of terror, fled from it when the sanguinary Guardiola celebrated his entrance with fire and murder; and they have never returned; but the naked, blackened ruins of their habitations remain as melancholy memorials of party fury and barbarism. We took up our abode in the house of the Governor, to whom we brought letters; it was less damaged than most of the buildings in the town, but still looked very dilapidated and uncomfortable. The *Jefe politico*, a tall robust-looking man, with sun embrowned face, rendered still more imposing by a moustache of vast dimensions, received us in a friendly manner, though not without some evident anxiety as to how far the new arrivals might trench upon his scanty stock of provisions. The wife could not at all repress her fears on this head, but began every conversation with a lamentation for the great scarcity of eatables, whilst one of the daughters made continual apologies that they could not possibly entertain us any better; which we took as a gentle hint that if we liked to shorten our visit we might do so without offence. It was very pardonable under the circumstances if they were a little uneasy; but in general the fears of famine

appeared to me exaggerated. People are so accustomed to superfluities in these fertile countries, that the moment the smallest scarcity appears they are afraid they shall starve.

Many of the inhabitants of Gracias who had provisions could not be induced to part with them for any consideration, fond as they are of money in general. "*Ne por Dios ni por sus Santos* (neither for God nor his saints) would they sell us a tortilla," said my servant, to whom I had given money to buy himself some of these flat maize cakes.

Under these circumstances it was not advisable to make a longer stay in Gracias than might be necessary to make ourselves a little acquainted with its physiognomy and situation; and I therefore made our host the pleasing communication of our proposed speedy departure, and thereby called forth a considerable increase of good-will from the family. Probably they had imagined we meant to stop several weeks; so of course they were consoled on learning that our visit would be limited to a few days. In the afternoon some members of the family accompanied us to a hill in the neighbourhood, whence there was a fine view over the elevated plateau,

the same that so enraptured Thomas Gage in the 17th century; but, alas! all the points that the Governor indicated to me were distinguished for bloody battles, victories, or defeats: not one for any sign of material industry, mental activity, or any thing likely to promote the happiness of the people.

The town of Gracias, which lies 2500 feet above the level of the sea, was founded in the year 1530, by Gabriel de Roxas, who thought by means of this settlement to obtain more advantage from the neighbouring gold and silver mines. But the bold and persevering defence made by the natives frustrated the attempts of the Spaniards, and they were compelled to retire after many fruitless struggles, so that it was not till six years afterwards that the two conquerors, Juan de Cleaves and Gonzalez de Alvarado, succeeded in founding a permanent settlement in Gracias. The Indian population of these regions must at that time have been very numerous, since the Spaniards, only a few years after they had taken possession of it, assembled 30,000 men out of 200 villages to resist further invasion. According to a census made by the Spanish Government in 1792, the department of

Gracias had at that time 40,000 inhabitants on a surface of 1541 square leagues, whilst, from subsequent estimates made in the year 1832, forty years afterwards, it appeared that the inhabitants of this department did not much exceed 30,000, of which 12,667 were Indians, and 17,350 Ladinos, Mulattoes, and Whites, distributed over ninety settlements. At that time the town of Gracias had but 695 inhabitants; at present it has no more than 500; so terribly has it suffered from the evils of war. The inhabitants of Gracias occupy themselves partly with the culture of tobacco, and partly in the neighbouring mines; but the other communications made to me by the Governor concerning the production of the town and the whole department appeared so extremely uncertain that I do not think them worth giving.

In the night between the 16th and 17th of April, a violent shock of an earthquake was felt in Gracias, and many people sprang from their beds and rushed out into the street. I ran directly to look at my thermometer and aneroid barometer, but found no striking change in either of them. The first showed 65° Fahr.; the last $25'\frac{29}{40}$. The sky was clear and starlight,

the air warm and fresh. No second shock was felt, but I learned that some weeks afterwards this same earthquake had entirely destroyed the beautiful city of Salvador, which is more than 100 miles in a straight line from Gracias, so that its sphere of action must have been very extensive.

Before my departure from Gracias, I saw a curious procession. It seems the custom prevails here, when a priest administers the last sacrament to a dying man, for the whole population to accompany it in solemn procession, with burning tapers and loud prayers. Even the night before, I had noticed an uncommon excitement about the place. The women were looking out their finest clothes, the men such as were least dirty, and wherever you went you heard talk of the *Viatico*. In a place where existence is so poor and monotonous, even this melancholy act of administering the Viaticum, appears to make a welcome change in the stereotype dreariness of daily life. Towards nine o'clock on the following morning the procession moved slowly out of the church, towards the house of the dying person, and the whole ceremony lasted several hours, and was most

numerously attended, but I did not the whole time see the smallest symptoms of emotion on the faces even of the women.

I left Gracias on Easter Tuesday, with an escort of a few soldiers furnished me by the Governor, as the road between Gracias and Santa Rosa was said to be very unsafe; perhaps also my escort had received private orders on no account to allow us to turn back, lest we might be led to make another attack on the Governor's stores.

A ride of two hours brought us to La Flores, a little settlement of scarcely a hundred inhabitants. On the market-place stood a number of people, men, women, and children, who were each holding a longish tube at their mouths, so that for a moment I imagined the good folks were all playing the flute. But as I came nearer I perceived that they were sucking sugarcane, on which indeed they had lived exclusively for some months. When I asked the bystanders what there was to be bought in the place, they answered "Nothing;" and that even a magistrate of rank (*un juez de prima instancia*), who had passed the preceding night in the place, had been compelled to satisfy his hunger by this same process of suction. The

juice of this plant is indeed extraordinarily nourishing, but taken exclusively for a long time, it produces an excessive amount of acid on the stomach, which has a very prejudicial effect upon the health.

In La Flores I again heard a great many tales about the insecurity of the roads; and was told that the commandant of Santa Rosa had sent out patrols in all directions to arrest the deserters and evil doers who were swarming in the neighbouring forests. There, the people said, there was still food enough, — fruits, roots, and game, and if they had not long ago left their homes and taken to the woods, it was only from fear of the robbers, though it remains to me to this day a riddle what there could possibly be to steal from these poor, naked, and destitute people. On the bare-foot, ragged soldiers of our escort, these communications seemed to make little impression. When we were going away they hoisted, as before, their rusty muskets and slung them on their backs by a pocket handkerchief; and one of them confided to me with great *naïveté* that his weapon was not loaded, and that in case of an attack he would have to place his whole hope in his bayonet. The river

La Flores flows with many windings past this village, and as there are no bridges, we had to wade through it several times, but fortunately it is not more than three feet deep, though fifty broad. The predominance of limestone in the geological structure of this country, and the great quantity of lime which the waters contain, may perhaps account for the circumstance that the teeth of the inhabitants of this district are generally bad, in striking contrast to those of the majority of the Indians, which are like rows of pearls.

Towards three o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at Talcua, which is situated on a height, at least 400 feet above the Rio Cospa, from which it has to fetch its supply of water. A great part of the juvenile population is occupied, as at Managua, nearly the whole day in fetching water in stone pitchers, and during the summer, when the small stream dries up in many places, the water is often not to be had for the fetching. The inhabitants consist of 400 full-blood Indians, and *one* white, as he calls himself, though I must own he appeared to me considerably more like a black. The negroes are always inclined to boast of the smallest mixture of

Caucasian blood, and in defiance of the most decisive testimony of complexion to deny their Ethiopian origin, and Señor Fonseca was certainly not free from this little weakness; but he well deserved to have it forgiven, as he really exerted himself to imitate the whites in their best qualities. He kept a little shop in Talcua, and carried on apparently a not unprofitable trade, for he lived in a very respectable manner, and even, in spite of the prevailing scarcity, was able to offer his guests various good things. Actual want did not indeed exist in the place, though it was so distressing in La Flores, scarcely twelve miles off; but it is not uncommon in this country to find the most surprising difference in the condition of the inhabitants of places quite near to each other. Probably the cause of the difference is merely the greater or less amount of indolence and carelessness in the inhabitants,—for in almost all parts of Central America the exuberant fertility of the soil in ordinary seasons might well cover an occasional deficiency; a very bad harvest here would pass for a very good one in Europe or North America.

Talcua is celebrated for the industry of its

inhabitants, who employ themselves in wood and cabinet work; and almost all the violins, guitars, or other musical instruments used in the country come from this village, though I cannot say the quality of the instruments is such as to afford a very high idea of the proficiency of the people in the art. They answer perfectly well, however, the purposes they are intended for, and you may buy a violin for about ten shillings, and a guitar for less than fifteen.

Our hospitable host, the blackish white above mentioned, not only gave us an excellent dinner, but arranged for the continuance of our journey with as little delay as possible. Señor Fonseca evidently exercised considerable influence over the Indians, and he used it for our benefit, so that we procured some very good fresh animals, capable of carrying us to Santa Rosa the same night; but the journey lasted nevertheless much longer than we had anticipated. We rode on for hours after it had become dark, scarcely able to distinguish the narrow brown strip of a mule path as it wound through the thick forest, and still there was no prospect of arriving at the end of it. The Brunswicker rode close behind the escort, not speaking a word, and

somewhat sulky at having been compelled to tear himself from the dainty dishes set before him by Señor Fonseca, to undertake in the dark night a ride not altogether safe, as he had been told, in broad daylight. I assured him that, from all my experience in tropical countries, danger was always much less than it was represented by the cowardly inhabitants, and that one well armed European need hardly be afraid of ten natives. We could not, perhaps, rely much on our escort in case of an attack, as they were like enough to run away; but I had an excellent five barrelled revolver and an English double barrelled gun,—so I could at least promise my countryman that we would sell our lives for a good price. There was, it is true, a possibility that our escort might, instead of running away, join the enemy, but I did not think this likely.

Very comical looking specimens of military men were these valiant guards of ours, with their ticking jackets and trowsers, bare feet, and helmets made of pasteboard and gilt paper! It was only from their muskets and cartouche boxes that any one could have had the least suspicion of what they were intended for; and

how little they were prepared for any warlike operations may be inferred from one of them having stowed away his store of long thin strips of dried meat in the barrel of his gun. I scarcely think any of the awkwardest of our Slavonian recruits would have liked to acknowledge these Honduran heroes for brethren in arms, and yet they belonged to the regular army of a sovereign state.

It was ten o'clock at night when we arrived at Santa Rosa, which, although one of the most considerable and opulent places in the department, does not boast a single inn; and this circumstance alone will serve to indicate how seldom it is visited by strangers. The few persons not belonging to the town, whom business or curiosity may bring to these secluded highland valleys, alight at the houses of friends or acquaintances; or if they have none, at those of the temporal or spiritual authorities of the place. We had brought with us a warm recommendation to the priest of Santa Rosa, the hospitable Father Miguel Leyda, and therefore rode first to his house. Late as it was, an hour at which, in a European parsonage, every body would have been long abed and

asleep, Padre Miguel had not yet returned home, and after a good search we found him at last in a house where there was a dance going on, and from the windows of which resounded merry music. As he had been forewarned of our arrival, however, he had made preparations for us in one of his houses, a one-storied, but elegant building with an extremely handsome corridor. It was long since we had found ourselves in such quarters, and even the Brunswick friend declared that he could make himself very comfortable in them, always supposing we could get something to eat.

CHAP. XXI.

Aspect of the Town. — Excellence of Climate and Situation. — Present Condition. — Population. — Cultivation. — Statistics of Tobacco. — Dread of an Invasion from Guatemala. — Merchants endeavouring to place their Goods in Security. — Visit of the Commandant. — State of the Garrison of Santa Rosa. — What Revolution gives and what it takes away.—A merry Party.— Santa Rosa. — Repeated Reports of Invasion. — Preparations for Defence. — Two new Travelling Companions. — Departure of the Brunswicker. — Farewell to Santa Rosa.

Next to Tegucigalpa, Santa Rosa is one of the pleasantest settlements in the whole country; and, indeed, in climate and position, it is even preferable to the former. Situated 4000 feet above the Pacific Ocean, surrounded by luxuriant hills and pine woods, there is something so pure and refreshing in the atmosphere that what Sir Humphry Davy said of Nice, that "mere existence was a luxury there," may most truly be applied to it.

The culture of tobacco gave the first occasion

for the foundation of this town, and in 1785 a royal tobacco factory was established here at a cost of 19,600 piastres. The tobacco trade increased rapidly, and seven years afterwards the value of 160,000 piastres was exported to Spain and Mexico. In the year 1797 there were nevertheless only four houses in Santa Rosa; but in 1801 the present parsonage was built, and its interior has been so decorated by mirrors, clocks, &c., the pious donations of members of the flock, that the general impression is quite imposing.

There are not, however, now more than 1500 inhabitants, of whom the majority are Ladinos or Mestizos; for of full-blood Indians there are very few; and the chief means of subsistence for the whole population is still the culture of tobacco, which flourishes best on damp soil. It is planted in October, in ground carefully cleared of weeds, and only about twelve or fifteen leaves are allowed to come to their full growth, the others being removed as they appear. Even of these, there are seldom more than six or eight considered fit for manufacture. Four plants will generally yield a pound of tobacco, but two hundred are required to make the value of

twelve piastres' worth of cigars. The entire production of Santa Rosa amounts annually to 150 tons of tobacco, of which the greater part is employed in the country in the manufacture of cigars; its quality is said to be equal to that of Cuba, and the price is very moderate, a thousand cigars costing only from five to eight piastres, and a hundred pounds of tobacco eighteen or twenty.* The tobacco exported is sent to Guatemala and the port of Omoa, and thence to various parts of the western coast and to the United States.

The royal factory has been, since the separation from Spain, allowed to fall entirely to decay; the walls of it are still standing, but these vast empty spaces are of no other use than that of serving occasionally to drill recruits in.

Under more favourable political circumstances,

* I had previously visited the principal tobacco plantations in Havannah, and there the yearly production in the neighbourhood of the city only is estimated at thirty millions of pounds. There are on the whole island about six hundred manufactories, which employ twenty thousand workmen. The yearly exports of cigars amount to between two hundred and two hundred and fifty millions, besides six or eight millions of pounds of leaves. The price of a thousand cigars there varies from twenty to forty-five piastres; the workman's wages alone for a thousand being ten piastres.'

and with improved means of communication, the cultivation of tobacco might be considerably increased, as there are numerous portions of land in the districts of Santa Rosa and Trinidad which are admirably adapted to this culture, though at present entirely unemployed; but the want of hands and of roads, as well as the general feeling of insecurity, has hindered the development of the country's resources in this as in so many other respects.

Scarcely were the wounds in some measure closed, which the robber-like incursion of Guardiola and his troops had inflicted on the town, than the unfortunate people had to prepare for a new invasion. The dictatorial ruler of Guatemala had been for several years at strife with the democratic President of Honduras; and since, in these mountain countries, it is often a difficult and dangerous undertaking to transport hostile troops to the seat of the rival government, warlike operations are chiefly confined to harassing the inhabitants of the borders and doing them all possible mischief. In this case it was hoped that the increasing impoverishment and sufferings of the country would have the effect of rendering the administration of Gene-

ral Cabanos unpopular, and occasioning his fall,—a result that the cruellest direct warfare had not yet been able to produce. In July, 1853, General Guardiola, at the head of some hundreds of Guatemalans, had committed the most fearful devastations in Santa Rosa. There were not at the time more than four hundred men in the place, out of the thousand which constituted then the whole disposable force of Honduras, and possibly they did not make any very efficient defence; at all events, they were defeated after a few skirmishes, and for six hours Guardiola's troops plundered the town, and then set fire to it in many places. A few of the inhabitants had attempted to save some of their most valuable possessions by burying them in the church; but they found that no place was regarded as sacred by their assailants. In two days Guardiola retired again across the frontier, not venturing to stay longer, on account of the difficulty of maintaining a numerous body of men in the distressed state of the country.

Shortly before my arrival in Santa Rosa, the report had been spread that Guardiola was again advancing with a considerable body of men; some even said that he was only a day's journey

from the town; and remembering the cruel ravages committed by him on the former occasion, many of the inhabitants were already preparing for flight. The merchants were clearing away the goods from the warehouses, and barring up doors and windows; the most opulent families were conveying their valuable possessions to places of safety, and keeping mules saddled day and night, in order at the first appearance of danger to fly to the forests, or some other secluded spot in the environs; and the whole town was in a state of convulsive agitation.

The moment might perhaps have been considered favourable for the study of many points of popular character, but a more peaceful condition would have suited much better the objects I had in view.

The sword is the enemy of all intellectual effort, and of every higher branch of culture. Even the noblest struggles for freedom, though they may have for their ultimate object the development of all the powers of humanity, tend for a considerable time to paralyse all scientific efforts; and there can be no doubt that the low stage of culture at which the Spanish-American nations stand, is attributable to party strife more than to

any other cause. Revolution may restore freedom to an oppressed people, but social happiness and mental progress must come in the train of peace and order.

On the morning after my arrival, notwithstanding the confusion that prevailed, I received visits from several of the political authorities of the place; and in the conversation I had with General Burbano, the Commandant of the town, concerning its critical situation, he confessed to me that the present garrison of the whole military district did not amount to more than sixty men; and that there was a very poor prospect of recruiting them to any extent, since there was neither corn in the fields, money in the treasury, nor patriotism nor courage in the hearts of the people. In Santa Rosa itself, he said, there were now only twenty men under arms; and he did not see what he could do with them in case of an attack, but withdraw them into the woods in the neighbourhood. After these revelations, it did not seem of much use to mention the order I had received from the President at Comayagua, for a military escort to enable me to visit in safety the ruins of Copan, which are situated on the frontier; and it only served to show the complete

ignorance that existed at the seat of government of the real situation of affairs, that I had been promised an escort of more men than the whole garrison consisted of. The Commandant mentioned for my consolation under the disappointment, that if he had been able to spare me any of his men, they would not have been of the smallest use to me, as they would certainly have run away if there had been any danger. Under existing circumstances he earnestly advised me to give up all thoughts of visiting the ruins in question; saying that the country was swarming with the wild hordes of Guardiola, who were little else than robbers, and were not likely to make any nice distinctions as to whether my baggage were the property of enemies or of a harmless wandering naturalist like myself.

It was a cruel vexation to me, however, to have to renounce my long cherished wish of visiting these interesting memorials of Indian antiquity; but my Brunswick companion was of a different way of thinking.

He was an excellent draughtsman, and had before been eloquent on the subject of the sketches he intended to take at Copan—but now all his artistic enthusiasm had evaporated: he

said it would not be worth while to go to such a place for the sake of seeing a few broken stone idols; and his only anxiety seemed to be to get to the coast as fast as possible, where he expected to find a vessel to take him to New Orleans.

The opulent inhabitants of Santa Rosa are mostly emigrants from Spain, who retain their European modes of life, and exercise generous hospitality towards strangers. Nowhere else in Central America have I met such cheerful, easy, and courteous manners; a few days sufficed to make me feel among them like a member of their family.

On the morning after my arrival, as I have said, the report of Guardiola's approach was very general, and many of the wealthier part of the community were making ready for escape; but when in the afternoon this rumour was not confirmed, they were just as ready to make themselves easy, and think no more about it, and to amuse themselves with singing and dancing in the open air in the place, a little way off the town, to which they had fled for refuge. It was a grand pic-nic party on the grass; every family furnished some contribution, and large mats were spread out, on which ladies and

gentlemen sat down in merry confusion. To see the great baskets of meat, pastry, and fruit that were produced, while goblets and guitars passed from hand to hand, one would hardly have supposed that we were in the immediate neighbourhood of want and distress. Presently the turn came to our host, the Padre Miguel, and he gave us a very pretty little song, and after that took a hearty draught at the liquor. I thought of Martin Luther's famous saying, "Who loves not woman, wine, and song," &c.; for it was obvious enough that the Padre had no objection to the two latter; but about the third item I was of course not entitled to form any opinion.

Whilst the company were giving themselves up to boundless gaiety on this beautiful carpet of nature's providing, I climbed a neighbouring hill to look at the landscape in the illumination of the evening sun; and a most lovely landscape it was that lay before me encircled by green hills, and perfumed by the breath of the pine woods. I have beheld many grander scenes, but never one of more exquisitely peaceful beauty.

As soon as it grew dusk the gay company

returned to the town, — the jovial Padre, guitar in hand, leading the van of the procession,— and betook themselves to the handsome apartments of the E—— family, where the festivities were kept up to a late hour of the night. All fear of the enemy had apparently vanished from their minds, and nobody was in the least disturbed by the thought that they might be dancing on a volcano.

With the morning, however, their fears returned. Again the cry was "They come!" A spy had been seized, who declared that Guardiola was advancing, and might be upon them before nightfall. Five hundred of the enemy, it was said, were in the neighbourhood of Copan, and another five hundred were marching from Ocotepeque upon the capital. I went immediately to the Commandant to ascertain how much of all this was true, and I found the worthy man—in bed, complaining of a sore throat. Not that he disbelieved the report, —he thought it true enough, —but he did not mean to get up till towards evening, and then he purposed to withdraw with his merry men to the top of a neighbouring hill. His lady, who by-the-bye kept a liqueur shop, was busy packing up her wares, which it was thought

might prove all too attractive to the unbidden guests; and orderlies and officers were going backwards and forwards, every one bringing a new report more circumstantial than its predecessor. No one seemed to have the most distant idea of attempting to defend the place, or even of throwing any difficulty in the enemy's way. The only discussion was about the safest hiding-place, and the best method of running away. "Ah!" said an officer, who seemed even more mortally afraid than the rest, "that vindictive Guardiola will certainly shoot me if he gets hold of me, for I have contested more than one of his victories."

"I do not believe," replied the Commandant, with a trembling voice, "that he hates any one so much as he does me. We fought each other in Guatemala and San Salvador, and now he will find me again in the ranks of his bitterest foes."

Anxiety and agitation hung, the whole day, like a cloud over the beautiful valley. On the Market-place, before the doors of the principal families, stood saddled a great number of mules, some of them with guitars hanging round their necks, and ready at the first sign of danger

to carry a great part of the population to some refuge in the mountains. As it grew dark, the heroic twenty above mentioned left their barracks and went and hid themselves somewhere, abandoning the town to the tender mercies of the "Tiger of Central America." The Cabildo, too, was empty and desolate, for the civil authorities had followed the noble example set them by the military, and kept themselves carefully out of the way. Many families passed the night upon the hills, and with this delightful climate and equable temperature such a frolic in the dry season was not likely to have any consequences prejudicial to their health.

Another morning came, and still no enemy! People were half inclined to be angry at having been so often deceived; and the fugitives returned to the town—the brave defenders of their country marched back to their barracks—the shops were opened again—the liqueur bottles of the Commandant's lady made their appearance once more, and all went "merry as a marriage bell."

A licentiate, as the young lawyers are called here, came to my room with his mandoline, and offered to play and sing to me, understanding, as

he said, that the Germans were very fond of music. He did not seem to think that "what kind of music it was" made any difference. I thanked him for his attention, and bore his performance of some Spanish pieces very patiently for some time; but then I ventured to remark, that I should be still more grateful if he would add to this favour that of procuring me a pair of stout mules and a good guide to accompany me to the ruins of Copan. "We Germans," I said, "when we were at home, were, as he supposed, enthusiastic for poetry and music, but that when we were travelling we were apt to be extremely prosy; that the neigh of a good mule, with which I could continue my journey, would have more charms for me just then than the finest airs of Rossini; and that after long toiling through the forests of the Andes, we thought more of beef and beans than of the most beautiful verses of Torilla.

My æsthetically disposed visitor seemed much surprised at this confession, and remarked that I might rather be taken for a calculating Yankee than for a susceptible German; for he had always heard that we valued poetry and art beyond everything. At the same time the polite

Spaniard promised to use his "very best powers" in my service; and therewith took himself and his mandoline away. I never saw him again, however; and if I had only depended on the use of his "best powers," I am afraid I should have been waiting for my mules and guides at Santa Rosa to this day.

Fortunately for me, Padre Migueleto was a much more efficient friend; and the licentiate had scarcely made his bow before the young priest entered, and told me that he had made all the needful arrangements for my journey. His own servant—a very pattern of cleverness and honesty—should accompany me to San Salvador, and, if necessary, even to Guatemala; but my visit to the ruins of Copan*, he thought, I must

* These Indian ruins were in 1840 visited and described with much detail by the American traveller, Mr. J. L. Stephens. They are on the frontiers of Honduras and Guatemala, on the left bank of the river Copan, which falls into the Montagua, and ultimately into the Caribbean Sea near Omoa. They cover a space of two miles, and consist of temples, idols, sacrificial altars, tombs, terraced buildings, &c., of coarse-grained sandstone. The historian Fuentes, who visited them in 1700, describes them, and especially the Circus of Copan, as in good preservation; but Stephens, as well as Colonel Galindo (in 1835), found them entirely

give up. No one would be willing, he said, to let his mules for an excursion to a place where the danger of robbery was so great. He also informed me that a recent land slip had much injured the effect of these ruins; and that considerable excavations would be necessary if I wished to make my visit of any avail in a scientific point of view. I had no such resources at my command as Mr. Layard at Nineveh; so I at last reluctantly gave up a plan that appeared to involve much certain trouble if not danger, and very uncertain scientific profit. It

decayed, with the exception of some of the monuments which had been built of more lasting material; for instance, on the bank of the river, a temple of hewn stone, 644 feet long, and from 60 to 90 feet high, containing several altars and idols. Besides these ruins of Copan, there are other Indian memorials in the neighbourhood of Yarumela, Lagamini, Cururu, and Tenampuca, of which latter Squier, in his Central America, gives a full description. On a hill twenty miles south-east of Comayagua, and on the road to Tegucigalpa, 1600 feet above the Pacific, there extend over a space of a mile and a half in length, and half a mile in breadth, numerous mounds of stone. Squier reckons some hundreds of them, and is of opinion that they were used for religious purposes; the nature of the ground is too rocky and barren for an Indian settlement, and it seems likely that the people only come up to this hill at certain times for sacrifice to bury their dead, or perhaps to escape from an enemy.

happened also that just at this time an opportunity presented itself of making the journey to San Salvador, in company with other travellers, — an advantage not to be despised in the then state of the country; and I willingly accepted the invitation of the Padre to join two persons going the same way, though, as they turned out to be only a grocer and an ill-tempered priest, I did not promise myself much pleasure from their society. They were both in a great hurry, and desired to set off the following morning. The priest, though scarcely more than thirty years of age, had a very worn-out appearance, and was leaving the country because, having been once associated with the enemy, he feared that, in case of an invasion, he would be regarded as a kind of hostage in the hands of the people. The grocer was of no party, but that of his customers; and merely desired to place a part of his goods in security before the advance of the dreaded Guardiola should render it impracticable.

I had a talk the evening before with my new travelling companions, and it was agreed that we should keep the time of our setting off a secret, since the priest was apprehensive that some of the people might be inclined to oppose

his departure. Each of us was to leave his dwelling at as early an hour as possible, and ride out alone to an appointed spot, at some distance from the town; and, in order to be more sure of having them in readiness, I agreed that the attendants and the cattle should pass the night in the house I occupied, and that I myself should give the signal for setting off.

At four o'clock in the morning, accordingly, we were all in motion; the mules were saddled and loaded, and each of the servants carried on his back a bag, with the most indispensable articles; and before the sun rose I was riding out of the town. The Brunswicker did not like being left; but a separation was unavoidable, as I had to proceed to the west coast, and he to the east. I recommended him, however, earnestly to the care of the worthy priest, and begged that the kind attention he had been showing me might now be transferred to my former companion; and Padre Migueleto gave his promise to that effect, and kept it, for on the very next day Herr —— was enabled to set off for Omoa. When I shook hands with him at parting, I hoped that we should have met again in his native city; but very soon after his return to Europe, the inde-

structible germ of disease that he had long borne about with him developed itself rapidly, and assumed a fatal character. He died within a short period after he had reached his home; and I was told, that, though he did not at the time appear much struck with them, he spoke often and warmly of the beauties of the countries we had visited together; and, forgetting its hardships and privations, described his residence in the equatorial regions as the most beautiful episode of his life; passing finally into the other mysterious world with the recollections of that paradise of the present one strong upon him.

I found my new travelling companions ready at the appointed spot, and then I had to part with the hospitable priest of Santa Rosa, who had accompanied me thus far on my way. In my many years' travelling, I have got accustomed to leave-taking, as a surgeon does to amputations; but I could not avoid some twinges on the present occasion. When, in these distant countries, you do meet any one you are sorry to part with, the process is the more painful, from its being almost certain that you will never see them again; it is like parting from a person dying: and with respect to my Santa Rosa friend, I was

doubly sorry, because there was no knowing whether the fair town in which he dwelt might not in a few days be the scene of all kinds of brutal violence. Poor Santa Rosa! But melancholy as the immediate prospect was, I consoled myself with the thought that there are better and brighter things in store for her sooner or later; the energy, industry, and mental activity of the North will be, probably beforelong, brought to bear upon her fruitful soil; the storm-clouds that overhang her horizon will be dispersed, and the way opened for her to prosperity and glory.

CHAP. XXII.

FROM SANTA ROSA TO THE WESTERN FRONTIER OF HONDURAS.

My travelling Companions. — An unpleasant Ride. — Guardiola again. — Cucuyagua. — Men and Animals fly before the Enemy. — The Difference between a North American and a German. — A Spy. — Meeting with Guardiola. — The Padre in his Fright turns common Informer. — Colquin. — The Indian Hero Lempira. — Family Affection in the Tropics. — News of the Destruction of the City of San Salvador by an Earthquake. — Adventures at last. — Cotalaca. — Olosingo, the last Settlement in Honduras. — The Frontier.

The dread of the fugitive priest, that he should fall a victim to popular fury, must have been very great, since, superstitious as he was, he did not hesitate to begin his journey on a Friday; and as he rode on with two pistols in his belt, a stout cudgel in his hand, and attended by Indians armed with bows and arrows, he certainly had not at all a clerical aspect, and did not look so much like a man who had the care of

the souls of others as one especially mindful of his own body. My other travelling comrade was not quite such a coward as the Padre, but just as ignorant and unsocially disposed; so we jogged on for hours together without exchanging a word—first an advanced guard of Indians, then the Padre, then a great dog, then the grocer, and, lastly, the "traveller from the Danube," with bag and baggage. Since I wished to make some little sketches and observations as I went on, I preferred keeping somewhat in the rear; and the little caravan moved so slowly up the steep, stony path, that it was no difficult matter to overtake it when it got ahead.

The Padre had a mule loaded entirely with eatables for his own behoof; and whenever we made a halt, he unpacked it and opened a number of bags, containing excellently cooked viands. Even pastry and confectionary were not forgotten; and at a moment like this, when the country was suffering great distress for food, and many of the inhabitants subsisting on fruit and roots only, the priest's banquets must have appeared terribly tempting to many of the lookers-on.

Our first halt had been made by the river

Legeto, but in the afternoon we reached the Savanna Grande, or great plain of Cucuyagua, an extensive grassy region, encircled to the north-east by a superb mountain outline, from which, at a great distance, rises the volcanic cone of Cucuyagua like a huge landmark.

On the whole extent of the plain there is no sign of human occupation but a few wretched hamlets, or cluster of hovels, whose inhabitants bear a very doubtful character; indeed, in some cases, it has been thought not doubtful at all, and the government, regarding their dwellings as mere dens of robbers, have repeatedly ordered them to be burnt down. When we came near Cucuyagua, we learned from some people, who were flying from it, that one of Guardiola's officers was already there, and his wild hordes hourly expected; the Alcalde of Cucuyagua had given up the keys of the Cabildo, and all the official persons had disappeared. At this news the priest turned very white; he did not dare to go on, nor yet would he venture to go back; so, as a natural consequence, we had to stand still, and under the green spreading boughs of a giant silk-cotton tree we held a long debate. The attendants were consulted as to whether there might not

be some circuitous by-path by which we might avoid meeting the dreaded troops; but there again was another fear in the way—we might lose ourselves in the labyrinth of the woods, and this might be as bad as going on. At last we came to the resolution of riding on to Cucuyagua; but when we reached it, we found it entirely empty and desolate, for the inhabitants had either quitted it, or shut themselves up in their houses. Even Guardiola's officer, who probably had orders to demand a supply of provisions, had left the place again, and the stillness of death reigned all around. There was not so much as an animal to be seen in the streets, and one might have fancied that the wonderful instinct that forewarns them of an approaching storm or earthquake had induced them too to fly from the fury of Guardiola into some sheltering hiding-place. We rode on; but since it had been supposed that there was some danger, the order of our march was changed. The Padre, who had before been the foremost, now brought up the rear, and kept two Indians with their bows and arrows constantly by his side. The grocer, however, joined me, as he said that a "North American" or an Englishman (the

common people here take all foreigners for North Americans or English) would not be so likely to be attacked by Guardiola's men, from the fear of reprisals. It is known that the governments of Washington and St. James's have both the power and the will to demand an account of any injury done to one of their subjects; and it is a great piece of good luck for a poor German if he can pass for belonging to one of these more fortunate nations. People might, if they did but know it, do him any damage, without the least fear of drawing down any one's vengeance; for what sovereign is there, in the whole extent of the wide German empire, that would disturb himself because a wandering subject of his had got knocked on the head in the deserts of Honduras? Little enough does a German's government concern itself about him during his life! If, indeed, he had been called Pacifico, and had been a cunning Portuguese Jew under English protection, then might no hair of his head be touched;—but who cares for a German!

Just outside the village we met a workman with a long gleaming knife, who, after a short conversation with the Padre, declared himself to

be a spy, and that Guardiola and his men were near at hand. What the Padre particularly wished to make out was, whether it was really the dreaded general, with regular troops from Guatemala, or simply a band of robbers traversing the Savanna Grande, and levying contributions under the name of this terrible firm. From the account given by the spy, it seemed pretty certain that it was the former; but considering the antecedents of Guardiola and his men, the assurance did not tend much to diminish our anxiety.

I am not sure I should not have been quite as willing that the approaching party should have belonged professedly to the other class; for does not our Schiller inform us that even the robber has his softer hours? — "*Auch der Räuber selbst hat Stunden*," &c.; and I never heard that Guardiola had any.

The Padre belonged to the party that had more reason to expect protection than hostility from him, but yet he did not feel at all at his ease; and soon after our meeting with the spy, two of our servants, who had gone on before, came running back to tell us that a crowd of men on foot were visible at some distance, but evidently

advancing rapidly towards us. The Padre turned pale again, and this time so did the grocer. The priest had been consoled for a moment by the information that they were regular soldiers, and not professed robbers; but who could tell whether this statement had not been made by the spy for the express purpose of drawing us into the snare, and seizing our goods and chattels, and moreover our eatables? Fear, everybody knows, is as contagious as yawning; and a certain feverish excitement began to be visible on the countenances of the whole party. I, as well as the rest, felt that our position was not at all a comfortable one; but I had the advantage over my companions of being able to find a little diversion from unpleasant feelings in the view of one of the most enchanting landscapes I have ever seen, even in Central America. I was endeavouring, in the enjoyment of this gorgeous display of vegetable beauty, to forget the danger that might possibly be impending, when a sudden turn of the road brought us all at once face to face with a dozen Mestizos, with scarlet blouses and caps, who silently advanced towards us. I could not help thinking of Jellachich's "Red Mantles," who played so remarkable and fearful a part in the

closing scenes of the Vienna revolutionary drama. This was the advanced guard of the enemy's force; and it was perhaps rather less ragged and dirty than most Central American soldiers whom I had seen, but still its appearance was deplorable enough. We passed each other silently, although our eyes met more than once; and soon afterwards the army itself, with Guardiola at its head, made its appearance. He stopped his horse as we approached; and when the trembling Padre made himself known, stretched out his hand to him, and inquired whence we came, whither we were going, and especially what was the state of affairs in Honduras. He was dressed in a kind of striped cotton dressing gown, with a black cap, had a large cavalry sword by his side, and was mounted on a horse which, though small, and not very good-looking, was evidently powerful, and well adapted for the hardships of a campaign. The General looked vexed and harassed, and there was an expression of suppressed rage about the lines of his mouth; and when the Padre, in his great trepidation, painted in the darkest colours the wretched condition of the country, and the feebleness of President Cabanas' government, he

could not suppress a slight malicious smile. Excited by the Padre's communications, and seeming to regard every moment as lost in which he was not executing some act of revenge, he then rode off in eager haste, exclaiming, "*Es necesario que acabamos con este picaro!*" * Guardiola's whole force did not consist of more than three hundred men — young, brisk, brown, barefoot fellows, who would have looked much better behind the plough than shouldering the musket.

They had no provision waggons, nor any other luggage with them, but they took the cattle from their pastures for their subsistence, and helped themselves to what they could get from the locked-up stores of the fugitive villagers; living, in short, wholly by plunder, though, in the prevailing scarcity, they very often, with their best endeavours, got but poor booty. The miserable condition of the people, indeed, which on the one hand made it easier to overthrow the government, on the other rendered the advance of the enemy more difficult, and the result of his movements more uncertain. The same

* "It is necessary to make an end of the rascal."

obstacles have frequently stood in the way of the noblest undertakings; but here was a mere mob of mercenaries, serving half for pay and half for fear, obeying, like machines, the orders of a dreaded task-master, as long as the dread of him was sufficient to overpower the desire to run away, but ready for revolt and flight whenever hunger or the deficiency of pay should afford a sufficiently strong temptation. On this occasion, although Guardiola met with no kind of armed resistance, he was compelled to turn back, with his band in a very deplorable state, without having overthrown Cabanas, or inflicted upon his government any considerable blow.

Among all the states of Central America, Honduras would be the most difficult for a foreign army to conquer. The badness of the roads, — or, rather, the entire absence of roads, — the impenetrability of the forests, the frequent want of provisions, offer obstacles as formidable as the presence of a large army, and obstacles which, as the numbers of the invaders become wasted by disease, it becomes more and more difficult to overcome. If the government of Honduras should fall, it will be in consequence of the internal decay of the country, and by no means

from the victories of these its irreconcilable foes.

After a day's march of more than fourteen hours, we reached a lonely farm-house, in which we determined to pass the night. The owner willingly allowed us the use of his corridor before his wooden cottage, but he was not able to afford us any kind of food; and though the priest had plenty of good things, he did not seem to think they would agree with my layman's stomach. I had with me some coffee, sugar, and rice, but not a morsel of bread or meat. So I sent the servants on a foraging expedition to a neighbouring farm; and they at last brought in a fowl, for which they had had to pay a piastre (4*s.* 2*d.*). But, in addition to the scarcity of food, came now the want of water; the cisterns were dry, and on the grassy tract we had traversed we did not pass a single stream or spring, so that our poor animals suffered much from thirst.

The next morning we passed Colquin, now a poor, decayed, Indian village but formerly the scene of the exploits of Lempira, one of the most renowned heroes of Indian history, who made such energetic resistance that, whilst the greater part of Honduras was taken by the Spaniards in

six weeks, it required as many years to subjugate the Indians of Colquin. The Spaniards had scarcely penetrated into the country, and attempted to settle there, when Lempira called together all the fighting men of the province, — according to the historian Herrera, as many as 30,000, — and represented to them the disgrace of suffering themselves to be conquered on their own ground by a mere handful of strangers, offering to be their leader, and to be foremost in all dangers. His example soon aroused their emulation, and once more the fire of freedom and patriotism blazed up; but it was but for a brief period before it was extinguished for ever.

In the numerous battles in which he was engaged, Lempira had never been wounded or struck by an arrow; so that the Indians regarded him as enchanted, and their attachment to him was strengthened by fear and veneration. He enjoyed such a reputation for valour, that it was maintained he had in one battle killed 120 Spanish soldiers with his own hand; and the Spanish general, Caseres, finding he was not to be overcome by open warfare, had recourse to an unworthy artifice to rid himself of his formidable rival. Under the pretence of entering on a new

negotiation, a Spanish soldier was ordered to approach within gunshot of Lempira, which, as the Indian chief was unsuspicious of any treachery, he was readily allowed to do; but to his friendly proposals, Lempira replied, that "a true warrior was never weary of deeds of arms, and that the victory would at last remain with the strongest." While he was uttering these words, he was shot by an arrow, and sunk mortally wounded to the ground. According to the descriptions we have of the Indian hero, he was of middle size, but broad shouldered and strongly built, as well as remarkable for bravery. Herrera thinks also that he was a wise man, "*for* he had but two wives." He was scarcely forty when he was assassinated.

The death of Lempira was the signal for general submission, since most of his countrymen had long been offering resistance more from fear of him than from love of independence; and there were some circumstances attending his fall, that leave room for the suspicion that treason among his own people was concerned in it. Probably, like some heroes of modern times, he committed the mistake of supposing the noble emotions of his own heart shared by his countrymen at large.

The great mass of mankind will always prefer submission to independent action, as it requires less exertion.

As soon as Lempira was dead, the Spanish captain, Caseres, sent to the various chiefs of the province presents of embroidered shirts, lances, Mexican shawls, *cocks*, &c.; and at the same time took occasion to signify to them that if they did not submit, they would come to the same end as their leader. The Indians made presents of cocks, in return, to the Spanish commander, and signified their submission; saying they would acknowledge the authority of the "powerful Christian" (the Spanish sovereign), for, since so many men obeyed him, he must certainly be a great prince."

The present inhabitants of Colquin seem hardly to comprehend the heroic actions of Lempira, but admire him as something supernatural, as the Indians of Mexico did Montezuma. In their deep degradation, they find it apparently quite incredible that one of their race, of their own flesh and blood, should have done such things; and it is not merely among the fallen Indians that we may trace this feeling. Has it not been common among the white races too, in all ages, when

they witnessed any great and extraordinary display of what human nature is capable of, to ascribe it to supernatural influence; and instead of feeling themselves elevated by the divine heroism of one of their own race, to prefer crawling in the dust before a fellow-creature, and declaring him a being of a superior order!

On the way from Colquin to Sensenti, an unimportant Indian settlement, we met a messenger coming from San Salvador to the Padre, supposed to be still at Santa Rosa, with the news of the dangerous illness of his father. The disease was an attack of apoplexy, and the messenger thought it most probable the priest would not find his father alive. But the reverend gentleman was himself suffering from a "vexatious malady;" and when he heard of the probable loss of his father, his first thought was for the safety of his own person, and he anxiously inquired whether I thought that, in the state he was in, it was dangerous for him to approach a dead body. The question was very characteristic of the worthy Padre, and, in some measure, of his countrymen; for, though I do not mean to say it would give a just idea of the general feeling between parents and children in Central America, I cannot deny

that I have nowhere else seen such painful indifference to domestic relations as among the people of this beautiful country.

The same messenger who conveyed the above melancholy tidings to the Padre, brought also a terrible piece of public news. A few days previously, the city of San Salvador had been almost wholly destroyed by an earthquake! According to this our Indian informant the town was entirely gone, and a lake occupied its place; thousands of people had perished, and those who had escaped had fled to the mountains. I had myself a special private share too in this misfortune, for my much esteemed colleague and travelling companion Dr. Wagner had agreed to meet me in San Salvador after our many months' separation, and nothing seemed more likely than that he was in the town at the time of the terrible catastrophe. It is in such anxious cases as these that one learns to estimate the advantages of civilisation. Had I been in the United States, I could have learned in a few minutes, by the telegraph, the precise amount of the misfortune, and by the aid of steam have been myself speedily on the spot. But here in Central America the slow pace of a mule afforded the only means of locomotion, and

I must pass many days in torturing anxiety before, with my utmost exertions, it would be possible for me to reach it.

But a little while before I had been complaining of the monotony of my tropical travels, — that I had met with no adventures, and witnessed no natural phenomenon peculiar to these regions. Now, however, having met with war, famine, and earthquake, I seemed to have little to complain of.

"Heart, what wilt thou more?"

I must own it would have been content, at present, if it had had something less.

We rode on, in spite of the weariness of our animals, to a late hour; for there was in this whole district only one settlement where it would be possible, without great danger, to pass the night; and on the way, we several times passed groups of brown fellows, who, with guitar or violin slung round their necks, intended to pass for itinerant musicians, but were in reality simply robbers, whose music had probably showed many a wanderer the path to heaven. Long after sunset we reached Cololaca, a small but pretty Indian village; and the priest, having donned his sacerdotal robes,

obtained thereby not only much respect for himself, but an abundant feed of maize for our mules. I have often wondered that the robbers do not assume this garb, as they would find it much more effective than that of wandering minstrels.

I must do our Padre the justice to say, that he did not show himself ungrateful for the attention paid to him, but promised that he would on the following morning, before break of day, perform mass in the little village church, and give the people the benefit of his blessing. This happy news spread like lightning, for the villagers had for several years been deprived of the advantage of a spiritual pastor. Only at the high festivals of the Catholic Church there comes sometimes a priest from the nearest town, to perform some of the most needful offices of the Church; but whoever thinks proper to die in the intervals must take the consequences, and be buried without her assistance.

As early as four o'clock in the morning, the sound of a modest little bell summoned the inhabitants of Cololaca to their church, and pious Indian women were seen wending their way towards it with lighted pine torches to guide their steps. In half an hour the Padre began the

ceremony before a small but grateful and devout assembly, amongst whom I think I saw one of those remarkable musicians whom we had met the day before. Perhaps he thought if he had no particular business on hand just then, he might as well attend a little to his devotional duties.

When you have once left Cololaca behind you, the landscape, notwithstanding the grandeur of its outline, begins to assume a bold and dreary character: you ride for hours over sterile, sandy soil, which reflects with redoubled power the burning heat of the tropical sun; and there is not a single tree to spread its green shade over the weary wayfarer. At one o'clock we came to the river Sumpul, which forms the western boundary of Honduras, and separates it from San Salvador. Here is a wretched little hamlet, called Olosingo, which is the last settlement in the former state; and as soon as we had waded through the stream, at this place about sixty feet broad, we found ourselves in the smallest, but most thickly peopled, state in Central America; though there is no examination of passports, no custom-house, nor so much as a stone to mark the frontier, or indicate to the stranger that he is now on a different

territory. We did not leave Honduras without kindly recollections of many friends we had gained there, or without gratitude for the hospitality we had enjoyed, or feelings of warm sympathy for the future prospects of this splendid country.

Before these pages leave the press, great changes will in all probability have taken place in the affairs of Central America; but, as far as can be seen at present, it seems likely that the President of the United States will acknowledge the government of the American adventurer Walker; and, whatever may be said of his proceedings in other respects, they will probably have ultimately the result of rendering the rich natural treasures of this country accessible to all the nations of the earth.

CHAP. XXIII.

SAN SALVADOR.

Physical Geography of the Country. — Boundaries, Area, &c. — Volcanoes. — Rivers. — Lakes. — The Harbour of La Union. — Acajutla and La Concordia. — Political State of the Country since the Separation from Spain. — The Clergy. — Tithes; and the Ofrenda Religiosa. — Educational Institutions. — Population. — Cultivation of Indigo and other Plants. — Balsam-wood Tree. — Silver Mines. — Trade in the various Seaports.

San Salvador, in the Indian language *Cuscatlan*, or the Land of Treasure, though the smallest, is the most thickly peopled and best cultivated of the five states of Central America; but its climate, as well as the frequent convulsive agitations of its soil, render it ill-adapted for settlement by Northern emigrants. It lies between 13° and 14° N. L., and 87° 90′ W. L., and comprehends an area of 9600 square miles; it is separated from Guatemala on the north-west by the river Paza, on the north and east from Honduras by the Sumpul and the Lempa;

and is bounded south and south-west by the Pacific, on which it has a coast line of 160 English miles. Between the mountains of the coast and the great range of the Cordilleras extends a magnificent valley of a hundred miles in length, and from twenty to thirty miles broad, which is one of the richest and most fertile districts of Central America.

The average height of the plateau of San Salvador is scarcely more than 2000 feet, though there rise from it isolated volcanic cones which attain a far greater height. The most considerable of these are the Conchagua, San Miguel, Chinemeca, San Vincente, San Salvador, Isalco, Santa Ana, and Apaneca ; and there are, besides, many extinct craters, mud volcanoes, and hot sulphur springs, called by the people *Hornillos*, or *Infernillos*. The principal rivers are the Lempa, Sumpul, Torola, San Miguel, and Paza. The Lempa, which is one of the largest rivers of Central America, rises in the north of the state, and flows first in a south-eastern and then in a southern direction to the Pacific, with a course of above 150 miles in length, of which at least two-thirds could without any great difficulty be made navigable for steamers. I passed this

river in 1854, on my way from Honduras to the town of San Salvador, in the neighbourhood of Suchitoto, and nearly at the same spot where Mr. Squier crossed it some nine months earlier. He saw it in its greatest force, in the rainy season, at the time when all the little mountain brooks were rushing down with their tribute, and enormously increasing its volume ; but I passed it towards the end of the dry season, when there had been no rain for five months, and when most of its tributaries were dried up ; and even then it appeared a considerable river, from 200 to 250 feet broad and two or three feet deep.*

I do not hesitate to say that it would be navigable for steamers resembling the flat boats of the Mississippi for the greater part of the year, at least to a considerable extent. The steamers of the western waters of the United States are, as is well known, of very small draught; I remember going down the Alabama in one which drew only thirteen inches, though it

* Juarros also considers this Rio Lempa as one of the principal streams of Central America, and estimates its breadth at 400 feet. — Compendio de la Historia de la Ciudad de Guatemala, vol. i. p. 24.

carried 100 passengers and 1300 bales of cotton; and by the employment of similar means a new line of communication might be opened in the country by the river Lempa. The Rio Sumpul, which is tributary to it, rises in the province of Esquipulas, and flows ninety miles in the same direction as the river Lempa before their waters are mingled. Besides the rivers I have mentioned, San Salvador possesses two freshwater lakes, of some importance, — the Lake Cojutepeque, or Ilopango, in the centre of the state; and Lake Guija, in the north-western part. I have not visited them myself, but the first is stated to be twelve miles long by about five in breadth; the second, fifteen by six, and like Lake Massaya, in Nicaragua, of volcanic origin.

The most considerable seaport towns of San Salvador are La Union on the Gulf of Fonseca, and La Libertad and Acajutla on the Pacific; but these latter can hardly count for more than roadsteads. A fourth port, La Concordia, was opened in August, 1853, and San Vincente, one of the most important commercial towns of the republic, placed in communication with it and the coast by a road of ten miles in length.

Cuscatlan was conquered for the Spanish crown by Pedro Alvarado in 1525; and his sword was for a long time carried about in solemn procession on the 6th of August in every year, though it afterwards came into the possession of the municipality of Guatemala, where I saw it, in the autumn of 1854, reposing in a crimson velvet scabbard.

The town founded by the Spaniards was named San Salvador, in remembrance of a great victory gained by them over the natives on the day of the Transfiguration; and the region which bore the same name was divided into two provinces, and four departments, which, since the separation from Spain, have constituted an independent state. The desire for a Federal union of the republics of Central America was stronger here than in any other part of the Isthmus; and most of the movements in favour of that measure proceeded from San Salvador, where also was felt the strongest sympathy with the United States of the North.

In December, 1822, when all prospect of a union of the five states seemed to be lost, and General Fisiola, with 2000 Mexicans, was threatening an attack on San Salvador, the Pro-

visional Congress came to the resolution of throwing itself at once into the arms of the North Americans, and demanding the annexation of their republic to the United States; and subsequently, during the administration of Morazan, a certain neutral district was, after their example, assigned to the Federal government, and the city of San Salvador appointed as its seat. This step, however, awakened the envy of the other large towns claiming to have equal pretensions to the honour; and especially of Guatemala, the ancient capital of the Spanish Viceroyalty; though perhaps the grievance was really not so much offended pride, as the fear that the material interests of their town would suffer by the elevation of San Salvador.

The political institutions and general system of government in San Salvador closely resemble those of Honduras, though it is the most liberally disposed of all the five states, and, after Costa Rica, most in the enjoyment of tranquillity and social order. The former President, Dueñas, as well as his successor, José Maria San Martin, who have guided the helm of government in very difficult times, belong to the democratic party, and have greatly promoted both the

intellectual and the material welfare of the country. The revenue consists of the produce of the duties on imports, and of the exclusive sale of tobacco and brandy (*aguardiente*), the receipts from which may be taken at about 450,000 dollars, and the expenditure at a trifle less. According to the statement of the official "*Cuadro demonstrativo*," now lying before me, the tobacco produced, in the year ending on the 30th September, 1853, a sum of 11,448 dollars, and the brandy 148,084.*

The internal debt of the state amounted in 1853 to only 213,938 dollars, but the claims of foreign creditors to 300,000 more; these claims mostly dating from the time of the Federal union, and having been incurred through the civil wars, consequent on the violent efforts made to introduce it. The immense losses occasioned by the

* Mr. Squier gives the total receipts and expenditure for five years, from official sources, as follows:—

	Receipts. Dollars.	Expenditure. Dollars.
1848—49 . .	397,405 . .	384,227
1849—50 . .	353,127 . .	342,453
1850—51 . .	402,619 . .	385,836
1851—52 . .	454,113 . .	415,207
1853—54 . .	600,188 . .	579,460

earthquake of 1854 (of which more hereafter), have also disturbed the financial position of the state, and rendered a negotiation for a new loan unavoidable; but for that catastrophe, San Salvador would be now the most prosperous and best ordered republic of Central America.

The clergy hold a very uninfluential position in this state; and by the abolition of the tithes they have been so extremely impoverished, that the government has found itself compelled, for the maintenance of the decent respectability of the Church, to levy a small tax for this purpose under the title of a religious offering (*ofrenda religiosa*). The erection also of a bishopric, independent of that of Guatemala, of a chapter (*Cabildo ecclesiastico*), and of an ecclesiastical seminary, have created an urgent necessity for additional resources; and on the 12th of March, 1850, it was decreed, by a resolution of the senate, that every inhabitant of either sex should, from the eighteenth year of their age to the sixtieth, contribute to the support of the Church to the following amount:—

Labouring people, or proletaires, one real ($5\frac{1}{4}d.$); small housekeepers, with property worth per annum fifty dollars, two reals; and so

in proportion up to the owners of property of the value of 10,000 dollars, who were to pay a tax of eight; the only persons exempt were the sick poor and soldiers on active service. At the conclusion of the decree, the ecclesiastical authorities are urged to represent to the people, through the inferior clergy, the absolute necessity of the punctual payment of this rate, if the newly founded cathedral is not, to the injury of religion and the disgrace of the state, to fall to ruin.

The contributions, nevertheless, came in very slowly; and a dignified ecclesiastic has assured me that the best living in the country does not bring in more than 1000 dollars, and that the bishop has very little more than the 2000 secured him by the government.

Education is still at a very low grade, although there is much good-will on the subject, and the university is, after that of Guatemala, the best conducted one in Central America. It has an income of 15,000 dollars, and ten professorships, each endowed with an annual salary of 400 dollars. Two of these chairs were in 1854 filled by Frenchmen, and the attendance of students at that time amounted to 250. Since the destruction of

the city of San Salvador, the university has been provisionally removed to Cayatepeque.

The ordinary schools are on the Lancasterian system, in which the elder pupils instruct the younger; and here also the instruction is limited to reading and arithmetic; writing being a privilege of the more opulent classes.

The military force of the state does not commonly exceed more than 300 soldiers — *veteranos*, as they are called—but in times of danger it can be raised to as many as 5000.

Of humane institutions there are in the whole state none that deserve mention, with the exception of four hospitals, making up together 150 beds, and the costs of which are defrayed by private funds.

Of the population it is as difficult as in the other states of the Isthmus to obtain any accurate statement; but the estimate of 394,000, or forty-one to the square mile, given by Mr. Squier, appears to be rather above than below the truth. Of these, scarcely one-fortieth are whites, the remainder consisting of pretty equal portions of Indians and mixed races; the foreigners resident in the country are scarcely fifty in number, and these are found mostly in the seaports. The

inhabitants of San Salvador are principally occupied in the culture of the soil; and the Indians have, with very few exceptions, not only entirely abandoned their heathen customs, but even forgotten the language of their forefathers.

The principal article of produce is indigo, which passes in commerce by the name of Guatemala Indigo, and has been, therefore, erroneously supposed to come from Guatemala, though it is not, in fact, cultivated there at all. The error has arisen from the five states of Central America having all, under the Spanish rule, borne the title of the vice-kingdom of Guatemala, and the productions of the various provinces having been known by one common designation.

The indigo (*indigofera disperma*) is a native plant, but will not thrive under a lower temperature than 60° Fahrenheit.

It is mentioned by the historian Herrera as being cultivated here in 1530; and described as a singular plant that colours water blue. In the time of the Irish missionary, Thomas Gage (1630), this branch of industry was so far extended, that the annual export was estimated by him at fifty tons. The mode of management is extremely simple, the principal trouble

being the careful weeding of the ground, as the sprouting of any other kind of grass is extremely injurious to the indigo plants; but four workmen can very well take care of five acres; for which fifty or sixty pounds of seed will be required. It is generally sown at the end of the dry season, in the latter part of April, or the beginning of May, and reaped three months afterwards. During the rest of the year the ground is used for Indian corn. The indigo plants, which, when they are cut, are five or six feet high, are laid in great pots filled with water, and left four or five days to macerate, after which they are treated with lime-water, when a deposit is formed, which is then made into cakes, dried, and in October and November packed into skins, in bales of about 150 lbs. each. An enormous space is required for the culture of indigo, as 300 plants do not yield more than a pound of the dye-stuff; and there are at present, as nearly as I can calculate, as much as 1,500,000 acres of land devoted to this purpose in San Salvador, which yield annually on an average thirty-five pounds of indigo, or thirty-one dollars' worth per acre.

Like every other kind of industry, the culture

of indigo has suffered from the frequent party struggles, and on the whole has rather diminished than increased; but the exports of San Salvador may be safely calculated as exceeding 1,000,000 dollars, for which European manufactured goods are chiefly received in exchange.

In addition to indigo, San Salvador produces tobacco, sugar, maize, rice, balsam, cacao, vanilla, rhubarb, cotton, coffee, ornamental woods, and precious metals, by which it keeps up a profitable intercourse with the neighbouring states, as well as remote foreign countries. The production known in Europe as Peruvian Balsam, is obtained from a tree, growing in such abundance on the western coast of San Salvador, between Acajutla and La Libertad, that the whole district, an extent of fifty miles in length by twenty in breadth, bears the name of "Costa del Balsamo."

Bailly estimates at 20,000 lbs. the quantity annually gained by the Indians settled there, who deliver it to the dealers in the towns at an average price of rather more than 2*s.* a pound. It is obtained from the tree by an incision in the trunk, much as the resin is from pines in Germany, only, on account of the greater value

of the fluid, rather more care is bestowed on it. The Indians fill up with cotton wool the wounds made in the bark with their sharp wood-knives; and afterwards throw this cotton into boiling water, which separates the balsam absorbed by it, so that not a drop may be lost. Its marvellously healing properties have been much talked of and puffed in newspapers, but do not very well stand the test of experiment. Its name appears to have been derived from its having been first sent to Peru, whence it found its way to the druggists of Europe.

The largest sugar plantations are in the neighbourhood of Santa Ana, in the fine valley of Agnachapam, where 375,000 lbs. are annually produced. The tobacco grows chiefly about Istepec; and with a little care might become an important article of commerce, as it is of excellent quality, but at present there is but a small quantity exported, and that only to the neighbouring states.

The silver mines of Tabanco, in the department of San Miguel, on the frontier, near Honduras, are of some value, and were for a long time worked by English capitalists with prospects of rich remuneration; but, subsequently, in

consequence of the difficulty attending the setting up of machinery, as well as the want of good workmen and sufficient facilities of transport, they have been in a great measure abandoned. Under more favourable circumstances they would probably well repay any labour and capital that might be expended on them. I myself brought some over from the St. Rosalia mines which are uncommonly rich in metal; but all the silver mines together do not, nevertheless, at present yield more than a value of 30,000 dollars annually.

A few leagues from Tabanco there are some gold mines, but they have never been systematically worked. Coal too is found in many of the haciendas on the way to San Miguel, and the valley of the Lempa river is said to be rich in peat.

The principal foreign trade of the country goes through the little ports of La Union, on the Gulf of Fonseca, and Acajutla, six miles from Sosnonate, for the trade of Port Libertad and La Concordia is as yet but trifling. According to a report of the British Consul in San Salvador, we find that in the year ending on the 1st of January, 1854, thirty-nine ships had entered the port

of Acajutla, and fifty-five that of La Union; but as San Salvador has only a western coast, her chief commercial intercourse with Europe, as well as with the United States, has to be carried on round Cape Horn, in a voyage of three or four months' duration.

The construction of a railroad across Honduras would draw a great part of the trade to the east coast, and bring San Salvador practically sixty days nearer to the old world; and in San Salvador itself, railroads might be made with little difficulty, and rivers rendered navigable for steam-boats; and her exuberant natural wealth would then become accessible to European commerce, and her teeming soil be opened to European immigration.

CHAP. XXIV.

SUCHITOTO.

The First Village in San Salvador. — A Consolatory Reflection. — Fictitious Reports concerning the ruined City. — The Rio Lempa and its Banks. — Arrival at Suchitoto. — Hospitable Reception by an Old Spaniard. — First News of Dr. Wagner. — Few Persons killed in the Earthquake. — A whole City Lodging-hunting. — Suchitoto, its Aspect, Climate, &c. — Friendship among Europeans in these Countries.

The first village of San Salvador through which I passed after crossing the frontier from Honduras, was called Betaca; — a poor little settlement, whose inhabitants we found still in a state of the greatest excitement on account of the earthquake that had destroyed the capital. The women were running about weeping, making loud lamentation, and tearing their hair like maniacs; the men were endeavouring to drown their terrors in brandy, and thereby procuring for themselves visions infinitely more horrible than any reality. In the village itself slight

shocks had been felt, and of the catastrophe in San Salvador, known to them only through the romantic reports of wandering Indians from the neighbouring villages, their ideas were wild enough. It was related that a few days after the first great shock, by which the town had been thrown into ruins, there had followed another, which swallowed up the very ruins, with all the remaining inhabitants, leaving not a trace of them behind, but turning the spot into a great lake. Other people had spoken to people who had seen canoes rowing about on the lake, and so forth, though there was not really a word of truth in the story of the lake. So great was the panic that one almost expected to see the raven hair of the poor Indians turn suddenly white; and it is by no means impossible that this dreadful catastrophe may, like the French Reign of Terror, have exercised considerable influence over the psychological condition of children hereafter to be born. Without any exaggeration, the matter was bad enough;—but of this hereafter.

Our little caravan halted for its noonday rest under the gigantic boughs of a silk-cotton tree; and the Padre, who was a desperate gossip, had

soon a whole crowd of the villagers round him, pouring out their tales of terror with breathless rapidity, in return for which he presented them with spiritual consolation. "Oh!" cried a group of half-drunken old women, "what will become of all the people that have died without confessing their sins? Where will the poor creatures go to who have not so much as been buried in consecrated ground?" "Make yourselves easy," said his reverence; "if all the people in the town have perished, there must be bishops and many pious priests among them, and they will take care to get them to heaven." This seemed worth considering; and, on reflection, the good folks came to the conclusion that the sufferers must have been safe in such illustrious company.

After a rest of two hours, we continued our journey to the Valley of Moro, for we were ourselves anxious and uneasy from the contradictory accounts that had reached us. We were now in the hot region—*tierras calientes*—and though we were 1500 feet above the Pacific Ocean, the heat was tremendous. At two o'clock in the afternoon the thermometer showed 97° Fahr., and even at six o'clock in the evening, when we reached Aldea del Moro, it stood at 85°. The

Padre had for a moment an idea of riding on with one servant, in order to arrive somewhat sooner at the sick bed of his father, but it occurred to him that it was very necessary to take care of himself, and that, considering too the insecurity of the roads, it would be most advisable for him to get a good night's rest, and then continue the journey in our company.

At an early hour on the following morning, the 24th of April, 1854, we rode over an extensive fruitful plain, where the vegetation was of a completely tropical character. Neither oaks, nor any of the *coniferæ* were now to be seen, but palms, minosas, &c., alternated with plantations of sugar and indigo. Each of our servants had, on quitting the hacienda where we had passed the night, taken with him a few sticks of fresh sugar-cane, which appears among the natives here to take the same place as the betel among the Indians of South America. The sucking of the sugar-cane is practised by them both as an amusement and as a means of appeasing hunger and thirst, for, in the inhospitable regions through which they often have to travel, it is sometimes the only kind of food they can obtain during a long day's march. The two

Indians, who, in their striking national costume, with their bows and arrows, attended the Padre, were incessantly occupied in sucking their canes, and apparently in a state of considerable enjoyment. I entered into conversation with them several times in hopes of being able to obtain some information concerning the manners and customs, as well as the language of their forefathers, but they spoke nothing but Spanish, and scarcely even understood a word of Indian. There was nothing but their dress by which their nationality could be distinguished; and the Padre confirmed to me my own observation that there are very few places in the state where any knowledge of the Indian language has been retained. The priests are never acquainted with it; nor, indeed, is any one, except occasionally a trader among the tribes of the coast, who perhaps finds it to the advantage of his traffic to acquire the language of Montezuma.

Towards noon we reached the banks of the Rio Lempa, and passed this, the largest river of San Salvador, at a place called San Francisco, three miles eastward from Suchitoto. Although it was near the end of the dry season, the stream was still from two hundred to two hundred and

fifty feet broad, three or four feet deep, and with a powerful current.

There is no such thing as a bridge in the whole republic, so we had to wade through, — a safe proceeding enough now, but in the rainy season, when the rivers are swollen, these wadings are often very dangerous, and many an incautious rider has been carried away by the current and drowned. Guides and porters have to go into the water when in a state of violent perspiration, — a circumstance to which, perhaps, too little attention has been paid in considering the maladies of the country. Our party passed without accident, except that when we were in the middle of the river the Padre's mule stumbled, and he sank up to his knees in the water. The creature recovered itself directly, and the priest suffered no damage whatever beyond a wetting, but he turned as pale as ashes, and trembled so that he could no longer hold the bridle; and one of the Indians had to take it, and lead him to the shore. As soon as we had reached it, we allowed our cattle a short rest under a tree, and the Padre unpacked his baggage and put on some of his finest clothes, in order to make his entrance in a becoming manner into his native town, which he

had not seen for several years. When we got to within half an hour's ride of Suchitoto, he learned from some people of the place coming that way, that his father was still alive, and he therefore rode on with his two Indians, while I stopped to allow my poor beasts some rest and refreshment, which had now become indispensable to them, if I did not mean to continue my journey on foot. Since our departure from Santa Rosa, they had never once had a really good meal, and yet they had had to perform a daily journey of eight or ten leagues, over stony paths, in a sultry atmosphere, and with a burden of between a hundred and fifty and two hundred pounds; and they had, besides, in the beginning of the journey, been by no means well enough fed to qualify them for the endurance of such hardships.

As we entered Suchitoto in the afternoon, we heard the bell tolling for the death of the Padre's father, who had just departed this life.

The town does not boast an inn, so I knocked at the door of one of the principal citizens, and was received with a cordial willingness, that I esteemed the more highly, as my host, who was a merchant from San Salvador, had suffered great

loss from the earthquake, and having fled from the perishing city with his family to escape destruction, was still in the greatest confusion. Don Cajetano was a Spaniard by birth, and, although many years resident in the country, still retained a completely European tone in his manners and behaviour. His wife and children were very charming.

I was shown, provisionally, for my quarters, to a large warehouse, containing a great number of chests and other articles saved from the devoted city; but I had my hammock swung in the broad, spacious corridor, which forms a chief part of the houses in Central America, and I had hardly exchanged my travelling attire for one rather better adapted for company, when Don Cajetano arrived to pay me a visit. He had been an eye-witness of the earthquake at San Salvador, and was therefore able to give me a detailed account of the whole affair; but several times, while he was doing so, the tears came into his eyes, and he was so agitated, that he was obliged to stop. He had himself been a great loser; a magnificent house belonging to him in the principal square had fallen, and all the numerous European articles of merchandise contained in it had been buried

in the ruins. My first question, of course, was, whether he knew my friend Dr. Wagner, and could give me any intelligence concerning him. The arrival of a European in a town of Central America is an event, and, if he belongs to the educated class at all, he may generally take rank as the lion of the day; so that I had good reason to hope that my travelling companion might not be unknown to my host, and I trembled as I awaited his answer. It rushed on my recollection too, that, when two months ago I had taken leave of Dr. Wagner at Managua, he had said, as he shook hands with me after mounting his horse, "Perhaps, some harm may happen to one of us, and we may never meet again!" It seemed at the time that there was nothing to lead to such are mark: could it, I now thought, be a kind of foreboding?

Since then, I had been traversing some of the wildest and least known parts of the Isthmus, but I had returned in perfect safety. Dr. Wagner, as he had had but a short distance to go, ought to have been a month ago in San Salvador; and nothing was more probable than that his enthusiasm for science, his fearless temper, and his special interest in the remarkable event that

had taken place, might have led him, without regard to personal risk, to the point where he could best observe it. To my infinite relief, Don Cajetano declared his decided belief that Dr. Wagner was not among those who had perished; but he could tell me little more. He had not been himself personally acquainted with the "*naturalista aleman*," but had heard much of him from a relative of his, a physician, who had been intimate with him.

Wagner had occupied, with a view to his scientific pursuits, a small lonely country house belonging to the then Prussian Vice-consul, Mr. Kronmeyer, a few miles from San Salvador, and only came occasionally to the city. It was believed that he had been there at the time of the earthquake, and a few days after it, he had been seen walking through the desolate streets with an Augustine monk, Don Estevan Castillo. The little chacra, or country house that he had inhabited had, however, been entirely destroyed, and it was thought that he must have gone in company with the Prussian Consul to a settlement supposed to be beyond the sphere of the volcanic action.

My first feeling of course was joy that his

life was safe, but then followed considerable anxiety as to his position and the means of entering into communication with him, and all my inquiries on these heads proved fruitless. Even the physician above mentioned, as well acquainted with him, could give me no information as to his present residence, or any other particulars; but I was consoled by the assurance that at Apopa, a day's journey from Suchitoto, or in San Salvador itself, I might be able to gain some intelligence, and I therefore determined to proceed thither with all possible haste.

It appeared that, in spite of the total destruction of the city, comparatively few people had lost their lives, a circumstance that must be ascribed to the numerous slight shocks by which the population had been warned. For nearly five days before, the ground had been observed to heave convulsively — and on one day — the Holy Thursday — no less than sixty slight shocks (*temblores*) had occurred. The effects were felt through the country for miles round, for the terrified people rushed out of the city carrying with them the most valuable of their portable goods. Half naked Indians were seen bearing away tables, chairs, presses, and other articles

of furniture to various temporary asylums, and a population of 20,000 people had suddenly became houseless wanderers. On the roads, in the fields, and in the woods little leafy huts were hastily constructed with boughs of trees, in which the fugitives endeavoured to find a shelter for themselves and their goods.

These *Ranchos de temblor*, as they were called, which could have little to fear from the most violent earthquake, were to be seen scattered all over the environs of Suchitoto and San Salvador, so that the place looked like a vast camp. In these the people felt their lives secure, and in the first moments of terror they forgot all other wants. During the dry season, indeed, one may live pleasantly enough under these green roofs of palm-leaves; I have myself lived under such for months together, and, in the charms of nature that surrounded me, missed but very little my accustomed European comfort.

The homeless people of San Salvador, however, had to look forward to a very different season. The earthquake took place towards the end of the dry time of year, and the violent tropical rains, which fall with their utmost fury at the commencement of the rainy season, might shortly

be expected. The people had no time to build their houses again, yet they could not, without danger to their health, remain in these leafy bowers during the rains, and they were therefore compelled to endeavour to house themselves somehow in the surrounding villages, so that the whole population of San Salvador was out seeking for lodgings.

I left Suchitoto early on the following morning, and as I looked back on it from a considerable height, it had really a handsome appearance. Most of the houses indicate a certain solid prosperity in the inhabitants, and a very active little trade is carried on with the neighbouring settlements; almost every house having a shop attached, in which the wife and children of the proprietor sell all kinds of manufactured goods; a great part of the population (estimated at 3000) is also occupied with agriculture, maize being grown here to a great extent. The climate is extraordinarily hot, and by no means to be recommended to European settlers; during my stay the thermometer varied between 84° and 95°, and was only once, and that at six in the morning, as low as 79°. In the rainy season, when the north winds cease blowing,

and the atmosphere becomes impregnated with vapour, a still higher temperature must prevail, but the dampness may perhaps render it more endurable.

The Padre, who had been my travelling companion from Santa Rosa, I did not meet again, as he was much occupied with superintending the funeral of his father and taking possession of his inheritance; when the funeral took place a great part of the population of the place followed it, carrying lighted tapers, as the old man had been much respected, and was said to have many claims on the gratitude of his fellow-townsmen. My host especially seemed to take his death quite to heart, for he had come with him in the same ship from Catalonia forty years before, had since shared with him many joys and sorrows, and the two men had together grown wealthy, honoured, and then aged and grey. In the widely-scattered settlements of these countries, friendship among Europeans, if it once takes root, generally assumes a more solid and lasting character than at home, where there are so many opportunities of forming new attachments, or, at all events, new acquaintances. Here you expect to go through life with two or

three friends, and the happiness which in the great cities of Europe is sought in amusements and worldly enjoyments, people here must be content to find in the domestic circle, or nowhere.

CHAP. XXV.

FROM SUCHITOTO TO SONSONATE.

Increased Difficulty of Travelling. — An honest Servant. — Apopa. — No News of Dr. Wagner. — Quesallepeque. — A fugitive Priest and his Church Properties. — The Ruins of San Salvador. — The Prussian Vice-consul's Will. — News of Dr. Wagner from a Palm-tree. — From San Salvador to Sonsonate. — Indians with Goîtres. — Probable cause of the Malady. — First Sight of the renowned Volcano of Isalco. — An unpleasant Night. — Arrival at Sonsonate.

The recent earthquake had greatly increased the ordinary difficulties of travelling in this country, for both men and cattle were in constant requisition to carry property of all kinds out of the ruined city, and neither men nor guides, neither lodging nor board, were to be had for money. Villages which had formerly held scarcely two or three hundred inhabitants now had to find room and maintenance for as many thousands; and the larger towns were equally overflowed.

To add to my perplexity, the servant whom the worthy priest of Santa Rosa had lent me to cross the frontier was now preparing to return to his former master; but I had by this time seen so much of the handiness and cleverness of this individual, that I endeavoured to make a new treaty with him. Simon possessed the valuable accomplishment of being able in the most miserable village always to find something to eat; when we got to our station for the night, he used also to manage to make me up a comfortable bed, and at the same time he attended to the mules with more care than he bestowed on his own meals. In addition to these recommendations, he had received from Padre Migueleto the very uncommon one in this country of being particularly honest and trustworthy, so that I thought myself very fortunate in being able to secure his services to Guatemala for twelve dollars a month, — about three times the ordinary wages; and I had such perfect confidence in him, that when we were riding through lonely forests I used frequently to give him my weapons to carry, and put myself thus completely in his power, without, I must add, ever having had the slightest cause to repent it.

And yet, when, some months afterwards, I got to Guatemala, I made the discovery that Simon was neither more nor less than a notorious thief, who had, moreover, quite a speciality for *conveying* horses and mules, and getting them taken to another State and sold there; and it was strongly suspected too, that when time and circumstance permitted, he was in the habit of practising other still more flagitious branches of the profession.

In Guatemala I was earnestly warned against having anything more to do with him, but he left me no choice in the matter; for when he perceived that he was recognised by some one who had known of his former proceedings, he suddenly disappeared, and I never saw him again. The recommendation of Padre Miguel remained perfectly enigmatical, but it perhaps only furnishes an additional proof of the careless habits of the people here, and their poor judgment of character.

Between Suchitoto and Apopa is a journey of about six hours, over an undulating hill country, resembling in its conformation the prairie of the State of Minnesota, in North America, but with the favourable difference that

instead of being wearied by the monotony of boundless cornfields, the eye rests on a beautifully variegated succession of magnificent palms, bananas, orange and lemon trees, tamarinds, granadillos, and sugar plantations.

Apopa, like most other places in the neighbourhood, was crowded with fugitives, bivouacked in airy green bowers of palm leaves, surrounded by a comical assortment of household chattels, probably snatched up without thought in the precipitancy of a headlong flight — just as, with us, people in flying from a fire will often carry off things they do not care a straw about, and leave the most valuable articles behind.

Getting any kind of lodging here was out of the question, for there were already more people in the streets than in the houses; so I prepared to pass the night in the open air like others, and at the same time endeavoured to obtain some further information concerning the travelling companion about whom I had still so much cause for anxiety. The Prussian Vice-consul, I learned, had taken refuge in Apopa, but, unfortunately, was just then absent, and no one else could give me any news of the *naturalista aleman*. I determined, therefore, to proceed

without delay to the ruined city, and there pursue my inquiries.

I passed the next night in Quesaltepeque, a poor Indian settlement of about 4000 inhabitants, only eighteen miles from San Salvador; and I was fortunate enough to obtain a shelter in the corridor for myself and my servant, whilst our animals grazed outside. Every corner in the house besides was occupied by a priest from San Salvador, who had succeeded in saving a great part of the valuables belonging to his church, and had deposited them here. Robes, censers, silver candlesticks, missals, Monstrances — masculine and feminine saints — and all the endless variety of ecclesiastical apparatus attached to the Catholic Church service, lay piled in the most disorderly manner one upon another; and highly honoured did the hostess feel herself in being allowed to harbour all these sacred properties, while she served up to her reverend guest the best viands she could possibly muster, and thought herself amply repaid by receiving in return a forty days' indulgence.

On the following morning, on our way to San Salvador, we again met great numbers of half-naked Indians, carrying furniture and goods

from the ruined city to distant places; it was a regular Exodus. The modern Herculaneum, when at last we reached it, looked indescribably desolate — in fact, a mere colossal heap of rubbish. Nearly all the inhabitants were gone, and only on the great square were still some signs of life, as a few of the authorities, and some families, too poor to move, or hoping to get something out of the ruins, had provisionally taken up their abode there. From here I proceeded immediately to the country house a little way off, mentioned to me as having been occupied by Dr. Wagner at the time of the earthquake; and I found in a valley containing some hot springs, and shaded by groves of cocoa-palm, orange and mango trees, a woodland cottage and a mill, both greatly damaged by the earthquake, though the scenery around them was as lovely and attractive as ever. I did not, however, meet a creature who could give me the smallest information, and I was about to return in a most disappointed and disconsolate mood, when my eye accidentally fell on the trunks of some trees, in which there appeared incisions recently made. I went nearer to examine them, and, to my great surprise and joy, discovered my own name, and

under it that of my friend, as well as of an estate near the coast to which he had gone. Dr. Wagner had hit upon this romantic method of giving me notice of his present abode; but, unfortunately, I had to renounce the pleasure of going immediately to seek him, for the hacienda of Tepeyagua, where he was, lay at more than a day's journey from San Salvador, in a direction where the road was particularly bad; and while my mules were in a most exhausted condition, it was just then impossible to hire others. In addition to these obstacles, I was myself so unwell that I was obliged to take some rest, and I therefore resolved to inform Dr. Wagner by messenger of my arrival, and then to wait for him in the pleasant little town of Sonsonate, to which I set off in the afternoon, with the thermometer standing at 95° Fahrenheit.

On my way I fell in with the Prussian Vice-consul, Mr. Kronmeyer, who furnished me with some details in further elucidation of the inscription on the tree. Dr. Wagner had, it seemed, been repeatedly attacked by illness, and finding himself unable to remain at the mill, had accompanied a highly respectable family of German emigrants from Konisberg to an estate belonging

to them near the sea-port of Libertad, where the earthquake had been less destructive, and where the kind care of his German friends soon restored his shattered health. Mr. Kronmeyer dissuaded me from attempting to go to Tepayagua, where he thought I could be of no use, and, from the momentary scarcity and confusion, might be somewhat in the way: but he kindly undertook to forward a letter from me to Dr. Wagner, by his own servant. It was not till many weeks afterwards that I again met my friend in Guatemala.

From San Salvador to Sonsonate, the distance is about fifteen leagues, and with good cattle it may easily be done in one day; but with my poor tired creatures, and the state of my own health compelling me to move slowly, it took us nearly two. A great part of the tolerably good path lay through a most beautiful primeval forest, which reminded me of the wonderful woodland scenery on the Sarapequi, in the State of Costa Rica. We passed two Indian villages, in one of which I was struck by the frequency of the *goître*, an affection that we are apt in Europe to consider peculiar to mountainous countries, and yet this village was scarcely 400 feet above

the level of the sea. It seems to me that the disease may proceed neither from the influence of the air or the water, but from carrying heavy loads upon the head; and Mr. Squier mentions that swellings of this kind are not uncommon in other parts of the country — Chenandega, Leon, Granada, and Rivas, none of which are more than 150 feet high.*

Towards six o'clock we reached La Puerta, a solitary farm, where travellers are accustomed to pass the night. The hut, which I was to share with ten or twelve Indians, looked so dirty and unpleasant, that I preferred camping out; and after spreading on the ground a cow-hide, the customary mattress of Central America, I spread myself resignedly upon it, and was richly compensated by the sight of one of the most glorious spectacles that Nature on our planet affords — an eruption from the burning mountain of Isaleo; the only volcano, with the exception of Yorullo, in Mexico, that has arisen within the memory of man. Only eighty years ago the spot was a cow pasture; and now there rises on it a magnificent

* "Nicaragua — its People, Scenery," &c. New York, 1852. Vol. i. p. 154.

volcanic cone, which, by the masses of matter thrown out, has already reached a height of 2500 feet, and is constantly growing. Every ten or twenty minutes there is an eruption, accompanied by a terrific noise of subterranean thunder, or like the discharge of a heavy park of artillery; and five or six years ago the explosions are said to have been still more frequent and regular. The superb fiery column of red-hot stones and lava is not always visible, but the rumbling noise is heard continually for many miles round. Dr. Wagner ascended this volcano a month afterwards, and stayed for several days on its declivities; but he will himself communicate the result of his observations.

A violent shower of tropical rain suddenly interrupted my respectful contemplation of the beauties of the volcano, and compelled me to seek shelter in the wretched hut, where there was now scarcely room to introduce myself and my servant — for ten or twelve naked Indians, covered with white cloths, and with the inseparable knife by their sides, were lying on the ground or swinging in some ragged hammocks, so that there was only a small space left for me

close to the door. I got my hammock swung, however, and lay down among this not very agreeable-looking party, while the storm raged and roared without with the fury of a true tropical tempest — the cuyotes and other beasts bellowed in the neighbouring forest, and the Isalco kept up the deep accompaniment of its subterranean cannonade. The hut was constructed of slender trunks of trees, without windows, doors, or any kind of fastening, and was the common residence of pigs, fowls, ducks, dogs, cats, frogs, bats, lizards, snakes, and all manner of vermin, which crept in the dark out of the ground and out of the hollow trunks of the trees, and made themselves quite at home on the skins of the sleepers.

In the middle of the night I noticed that several of the Indians were talking together, and so softly, that though they spoke in Spanish, I could not make out a word. I thought this was the time when they ought to have been asleep, and that, being in total darkness and surrounded by a dozen of these armed semi-savages, I might as well be on my guard. As I had one left of the stearine candles that I usually carried with me for extraordinary occasions, I now lit

it, that I might at least see what was going on. But most of the Indians were lying on the ground, and appeared to be tormented by mosquitoes or other insects, for they were continually slapping their naked bodies; but some had risen, and were going out with their knives in their hands.

I placed my weapons in a convenient position, and then lay down again, but without any intention of trying to sleep; and my servant also seemed to have been disturbed by the behaviour of the Indians, and remained sitting up near me. As long as the candle remained alight, it made things look a little less uncomfortable, for at least I could watch the movements of my suspicious comrades; but, alas! the draughts of air that came in from all quarters, made it burn away very fast, and long before morning we were again in total darkness. I then took my gun and my revolver and went out into the open air. The rain had ceased, and the thirsty ground had eagerly drunk in all that had fallen; the air was delightful, and some stars were twinkling through some rents in the clouds. The voices of the animals in the woods too by their change gave notice of the approach of day;

the howling of the cuyotes and *allouates* *, and the croaking of the frogs, had become less frequent; and the birds were trying their voices for their morning songs, in little trills from among the green leaves. Only the volcano still kept up his unchanging bass, exactly as he had on the preceding evening; but the fiery column was no longer visible, and the summit was wrapt in thick clouds.

I lingered a long time in the open air, for though it might be that I ran more risk from the creeping and flying multitude of creatures that were beginning to swarm around me, than I should have done in the hut, the feeling was less unpleasant than that of being inclosed in that dark, confined space, with those unknown dusky companions, who, if they had not wanted the courage, were not likely to want the will to make short work with me and my goods.

It is a very painful thing to have to regard one's fellow-creatures as if they were so many beasts of prey; but the traveller in these countries hears too many stories of robbery and murder, and sees too often the lonely grave hillocks that frequently mark the spots where

* A kind of American monkey, *Simia Seniculus.*

such deeds have taken place, not to feel himself justified in a certain amount of suspicion and caution.

I must own, that during my many wanderings in the tropics no adventure of this kind has ever fallen in my way, and I have personally little cause to complain of dishonesty on the part of the natives; but I cannot undertake, nevertheless, to affirm the general safety of travelling in Central America; or that the disposition of the natives towards the whites is commonly upright and friendly.

I left these uncomfortable quarters, and set off again while it was still dark; for, independently of any other reason, the heat of the region in which we now found ourselves obliged me to adopt this plan, in order that we might reach a resting station before the sultry hours of the day. We rode for several hours through a park-like woodland tract, in which the trees afforded shade enough to protect us from the burning rays that the sun was already sending over the earth; and several times we passed a lonely hillock, marked with a wooden cross, where rested, according to the declaration of my guide, the bones of a murdered traveller.

Scarcely a month passed, as I was informed by my talkative Peon, in which some murder was not committed in this wood; but since the government had proceeded with great severity against the evil-doers, there had been some improvement; and just at the present moment the destruction of the capital had so much increased the number of travellers, that the roads were less insecure.

We here again met many Indians, who were carrying loads of from 120 to 150 pounds upon their backs from Salvador to Sonsonate, and for this journey of fifty-four English miles, the payment they received was twenty reals, or rather less than ten shillings English.

Towards noon we passed a little river, of such inviting coolness, that I could not resist the temptation of making a halt that I might have a plunge in its clear waters. One of the guides warned me to beware of the crocodiles; but it appears to me that the fear of these monsters amongst the natives somewhat exceeds the danger, for I never heard of one instance in which a bather had been attacked by them. There is, I believe, more risk at the mouths of rivers and on the seashore; but, with a little

caution, one need not refrain from this healthful and delightful indulgence.

After a short stay at the ancient Indian village of Isalco, we continued the journey to Sonsonate, where I arrived, very much exhausted, on the afternoon of the 28th of April, and I went to the house of a physician settled there, a Dr. Ypina, to whom I had a letter, and from whom I met with a warm and hospitable reception. Unfortunately the state of my health would now not allow of my customary activity, and I was compelled to renounce the pleasure of accepting my host's kind invitation to visit in his company the most remarkable spots in the vicinity. For several days I remained confined to my room; and though in my ordinary condition I know of no enjoyment so great as that of making the collections, inquiries, and observations that may serve, however humbly, to promote the cause of science, I now felt too much worn-out to desire any enjoyment whatever but rest.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SAN SALVADOR ON THE EASTER NIGHT OF 1854.*

Gloomy Portents. — Devotion interrupted. — The Volcano of San Salvador. — Signs of its former Activity. — Festivities of Easter Morning. — Grand Promenade of Saints. — A warning Shock. — Fever, Earthquake, and Darkness. — The Catastrophe. — A Night Walk through the ruined City. — The Interior of the Franciscan Convent. — The University Clock. — The Augustine Monk, Estevan Castillo. — Noble Conduct of the President. — A Prophecy not fulfilled.

The capital of San Salvador, which was founded by the Spaniards in 1528, stood, before the recent catastrophe, on a plateau about 2000 feet above the Pacific Ocean, in the most fertile district of the country. Among all the cities I have seen in Central America, Guatemala only excepted, it was the neatest and pleasantest in appearance, and contained several handsome churches and

* This chapter is communicated by Dr. Wagner.

convents, a newly-built university, many private houses in excellent style, and an abundance of busy shops, and it only needed a more secure state of public affairs to make great advances in prosperity. Perhaps, I may add, it also needed a more lucrative article of export; for indigo is by no means so advantageous, in a commercial point of view, as coffee, for which the climate and soil of Central America is particularly adapted; but, unfortunately, its general cultivation has been prevented by want of confidence in the future.

On the 12th and 13th of April, 1854, there was heard in the upper part of the city, towards the south-west, a hollow, subterranean, rumbling noise, which recurred at short intervals, and continued for several minutes, appearing to come from the mountains which form a kind of large semicircle at the foot of the volcano; but there was no shock whatever. On the Good Friday, at half-past seven in the morning, two slight shocks, quickly succeeding each other, were felt, and, about ten minutes afterwards, a rather stronger one. The roof and walls of my cottage shook, without my at first perceiving the cause; but a young Spaniard, who waited on me, said quietly, "*Es un temblor.*" Being a native of the

country, he was accustomed to the phenomenon, and thought little of it. These tremblings and rockings of the earth, that seem so terrible to us Europeans, are such ordinary occurrences in the environs of San Salvador, that the district has acquired the name of the "swinging mat;" but these shocks, though frequent, had never been hitherto of the violent and destructive character which they have assumed at Valparaiso and Lima, where about once in a century the destruction of a town is reckoned on as a matter of course.

The volcano of Isalco too, being in constant activity, and only forty-eight miles south of the city of San Salvador, had always been regarded as a chimney and safety valve, affording a free vent for the steam and other dangerous products of the subterranean furnace.

The shocks were repeated at tolerably regular intervals, two or three in an hour, during the whole of the Good Friday, and all had the same direction, namely, from west-south-west to east-north-east; at which point, a league from the town, lies the great crater of Cuscatlan, about 500 feet above San Salvador.

The ceremonies of the Good Friday proceeded with the accustomed pomp, and people did not

think of disturbing their processions, or their visits to the cathedral, on account of the earthquake; though occasionally, when there came a shock rather stronger than usual, some of the devout crowd did turn pale, and make a rush towards the doors. At half-past nine in the evening, there came a shock so violent, that the houses were shaken to the foundations, the roofs cracked, plaster and tiles fell, and the walls in many places were rent. The houses are all low and broad, without upper stories, the walls mostly of clay, which is very elastic, and the rafters made of pliable, closely plaited cane, admirably adapted to resist the most violent shocks, otherwise, the houses would have fallen in a mass with this one, which lasted eight seconds, the ground undulating like the ocean. Every one rushed out into the open air, but a full hour passed without any further movement. We determined, nevertheless, not to sleep under a roof; but my countryman, M. Kronmeyer, the Prussian Vice-consul, who came home about eleven o'clock, laughed at our caution, and went to bed as usual in his bedroom. He was used to these unpleasant occurrences; though he confessed that, during a residence of sixteen years in Central America and Mexico, he

had never felt in one day so many shocks as during the one just past.

The old volcano of Cuscatlan, from which the shocks appeared to proceed, lies, as I have said, about three miles from the city; viewed from this direction, it forms a beautiful cone, with a gently-rounded summit, and its sides are clothed from top to bottom with wood; its crater is still quite perfect, a mile and a half in diameter, and filled with water at the bottom. It is about 1000 feet above the general level of the table-land on which it is placed; and far below its cone, there extends, in a semicircular direction, a range of heights, which form the continuation of the mountain towards the south; while beyond the elevated valley of Santa Testa, other mountains continue the chain in a similarly semicircular form, rising above the plain to the height of 1000 or 1600 feet, the two ridges being connected by a low narrow range of hills, consisting of trachyte porphyry, partly covered with volcanic tuffa.

There exists no certain record of the former activity of this volcano; but according to tradition, an eruption of lava from a cleft in its side took place in 1650, and overwhelmed the village of

Nehapa; but, according to others, it was merely an eruption of mud, and not of fire. Some suggestions concerning the geological structure of this plateau are offered by the ravine through which the Rio Aselhuate, the only river of this region, descends from the mountain. In the dry season this river is a mere little brook, but in the rainy time it overflows its banks, and occasions fearful devastation. The ravine is narrow and deep, with its rocky walls in many places perpendicular and washed bare, so that the strata of the plateau are seen in profile to a depth of 160 to 200 feet; and between the volcanic tuffa and beds of conglomerate, composed of crumbled trachyte and volcanic ashes caked together, and probably the product of old mud eruptions, are seen beds of black basaltic compact lava. These are infallible signs of the long-continued activity of the volcano, which must have once covered the whole region with lava, ashes, and mud, and thus furnished the greater part of the material by which the fruitful table-land was raised to its present height.

The morning of Easter Sunday was announced as usual by the firing off of rockets, and a joyous burst of military music. The multitude betook

themselves in festival procession to the cathedral, to witness the celebration of high mass; the houses were gaily adorned with branches of palm and banana leaves, and the "*Sanctissimum*" was borne in triumph through the streets, followed by crowds of señors and señoritas in their gayest attire. In the afternoon took place, according to custom, the ceremony called the "Promenade of the Saints," in which the colossal wooden carved images of these holy personages are taken from the churches, dressed in new and costly robes, and paraded through the streets. Wherever two of these saints meet, they are made to stop and mutually embrace, and the attendant throng salutes the spectacle with endless shouts, and the discharge of hundreds of rockets. On this Easter Day, as on preceding ones, the people, after having performed their devotions like good Catholics, gave themselves up to festivity and enjoyment, and the day closed with music, feasting, and fireworks.

Immediately after nine o'clock, however, a shock occurred more violent than the strongest felt on the Good Friday. I was unwell with a slight feverish attack, and had gone to bed, but was awakened by the noise. Some walls fell in,

many houses were rent, and a part of the ceiling of my room fell, striking me on the head and face, and for some minutes blinding me with the dust. I sprang from my bed and groped my way to the door, which unluckily I had locked; but after a time I succeeded in getting it open, and made my way to the courtyard, where I found the rest of the inhabitants of the house praying and screaming.

After a few moments had elapsed, however, they had quite got over their fright, and were joking and laughing at their previous consternation and precipitate flight. Unless the houses actually fall, people do not, after the first moment, think much of these shocks, but this time they did take the precaution to put all their doors open, and had their beds carried out into the court. Mine was placed under the gallery of the corridor, and a great deal of compassion was expressed for me when they found I had been a little hurt. A young doctor, who occupied the room next to mine, thought there would be no strong "temblor" again to-night, but an aged priest said that this house was old and decayed, and it was very necessary to be careful. My housemates then went back into

their rooms, and, though they kept the doors open, consumed with a good appetite the remainder of the Easter feast, the conversation the while turning, of course, almost exclusively upon the "temblor."

I lay gazing up into the night sky, not feeling at all inclined to sleep. The day had been, as usual, very warm, the thermometer at noon showing 88° Fahr.; a heavy mass of clouds (*Strato-Cumulus*) lay piled up about the waning moon, but dispersed towards ten o'clock, and the moon then shone brightly through a clear and tranquil atmosphere. A few light scattered clouds of the *Cirrus* and *Cirro-Stratus* lay motionless at a few points on the horizon, but there was nothing to portend any unusual phenomenon.

At thirty minutes past ten, however, came the shock that laid the city of San Salvador in ruins. It began with a terrific noise, the earth heaving as if lifted by a subterranean sea; and this movement, and the thunder accompanying it, continued for ten or twelve seconds, while the crash and uproar of falling buildings were still more deafening than the thunder. An immense and blinding cloud of dust arose, through which

were heard the shrieks and supplications of the flying people, calling on "Maria Santissima" and all other saints; and at length a hymn, in thousand-voiced chorus, which was heard plainly, through all the other noises, at the distance of a mile and a half from the town, by a family of German emigrants with whom I was acquainted.

I had witnessed many terrible scenes of war and revolution in the Old World, but there at least they were visible enemies of flesh and blood with whom people had to contend; but here were unknown, terrific, incalculable powers at work, of whose nature they had only the vaguest idea. The shocks went on, sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker, and with very brief intervals, until, by the evening of Easter Monday, one hundred and twenty had been counted, and they were accompanied all the time by hollow thunder and detonations, as if a tremendous battle were raging beneath the earth. People now abandoned all thoughts of their property, and sought only to save their lives, for, with the continual oscillations of the ground in all directions, rents and chasms were opening on it, so that no one knew whether it might not the next moment yawn beneath their feet and engulf every living soul. After

every new shock I noticed that the people changed their prayers and the names of the saints they were invoking; but whether the saints did not hear, or could not or would not help them, the subterranean artillery continued to bellow forth its fearful salvos with unmitigated fury.

Towards one o'clock in the morning, one of my acquaintances came climbing over the ruined wall of our court-yard to inquire after me, as he knew I was unwell; and he then proposed to me to take a walk through the town by moonlight. We took the direction of the market-place, where the Cathedral stood; and, from what I saw, I can truly say that the whole city was destroyed, for I did not see a *single* house uninjured. Those that were not lying in ruins had so many rents, and damages of various kinds, as to be quite uninhabitable. The Cathedral—an elegant, rather than imposing building—had escaped with less damage than many other churches; but the clock-tower had fallen, the portal was lying in fragments, and the walls were gaping open in two or three places.

The interior of the Franciscan convent, the door of which stood wide open, presented a sad

picture of desolation. So many stones had fallen from the roof, and such large portions of the walls, that most of the altars lay scattered in fragments, or were covered with rubbish; several of the colossal figures of saints had fallen from the niches, and lay with their finery all covered with dust and stones; but the people, who the day before had been bearing them about in triumph, now did not trouble themselves any more about them: everybody was occupied in saving his life, or, if possible, his most valuable possessions. Of the new University buildings, only one wing was left standing: it was the one containing the clock-tower, and in this the clock was still going on, regularly striking the hours. The roof of the Episcopal Palace had fallen in, and some stones had struck the sacred head of the bishop with no more ceremony than had been shown towards our profane pates, though this bishop was Don Tomaso Saldana, a man most justly held in high repute for the excellence of his life. Much injury had also been sustained by the President of the Republic, Señor Duenas, who was originally a monk, but afterwards a lawyer and a statesman, and perhaps the man of the greatest capacity in the whole country.

The streets were empty and desolate, and we had to scramble over heaps of ruins to get through them: not a creature was to be seen but a few sentinels, and in the interior of the houses also there reigned the stillness of the grave. Even in the broadest streets the people did not think themselves safe, and rich and poor were huddled together indiscriminately in the great square, praying, singing, and screaming whenever a new shock startled them with its terrible explosion; but fortunately, in the midst of all this, the new President, Don José Maria San Martin, showed much presence of mind, and gave his orders for the preservation of property with much composure.

At the corner of the Cathedral we met the Augustine monk, Don Estevan Castillo, a member of a family of distinction here, and a highly valued friend of my own. He was one of the most intellectually-gifted men I have ever known in Central America, with a fervent love of knowledge, though much given to abstract metaphysical speculation, and delighting to try his strength on those great mysteries of existence which have puzzled the thinkers of all ages to little purpose. Our last conversation on the seemingly blind

sway of the powers of Nature was strangely in coincidence with the scene now surrounding us; and I believe he was thinking of that as he pressed my hand, when we met, without speaking. All the higher clergy had taken flight; but he was going about, accompanied by some stout men, to dig out people buried in the ruins; and, by break of day, he had got out several hundreds of bodies, but all dead; and, probably, but for the previous warning shock, the destruction would have been much greater. The present writer, among others, would certainly, but for them, not have been at this moment alive to tell of the earthquake.

The rising sun of Easter-Monday morning shone on a mournful spectacle; and the few people who were left in the town wandered about looking pale and worn, the women with a total disregard of their dress very unusual with them. Amongst these I noticed the wife of the President, who was entreating him to fly, like so many others, from the scene of danger; but he remained faithful to his duty, and was exerting himself vigorously to keep order. He had established a kind of court-martial under a tent on the University Square, before which every thief

caught in the fact was brought, and, on the evidence of two witnesses against him, immediately shot.

Since the ruins of San Salvador could now no longer offer me a shelter, I set off on foot, at an early hour, towards the hacienda of Mr. Kronmeier; and on the way felt four more shocks, the strongest of which lasted six or seven seconds, and was accompanied by violent oscillations of the ground, and detonations like the salvos from Vesuvius, when, in the lesser eruptions, you stand near the crater while stones are being thrown up. I was now more convinced than ever that the centre of the subterranean action was very near, and that the explosive steam and glowing masses of the interior were seeking a new outlet.

The country-house of Mr. Kronmeier was still standing; but its thick walls had been rent in so many places, that it offered only an uncomfortable and insecure shelter. From the steep cliffs on the left of the river's bed masses of rock and earth had fallen, and the hot springs at the foot of the hill had ceased to flow; the mill-stream was dry; one of the cocoa-palms was prostrate; and the whole landscape, so lovely

before, had a dejected and melancholy aspect, increased, of course, by the general flight of the inhabitants of the district. Nobody but vagabonds and thieves seemed to be about; and Mr. Kronmeier, I found, had gone to Apopa, nine miles to the eastward of San Salvador, where the shocks were little felt. I was alone in the hacienda, and, unfortunately, without the means of leaving it; since the mules had been all stolen, and I was still too ill with the fever for it to be possible for me to undertake any long journey on foot. The shocks still went on, though they were not so frequent as on the two Easter nights; and, as the subterranean forces were evidently struggling for a new vent, no one could feel himself safe within the sphere of their operations.

Many of the people whom we met, however, were leaving the place, though not so much for any reason of this kind, as on account of a prophecy of the worthy bishop, "that before the new moon the whole district of San Salvador, with the ruins of the city, would be swallowed up." But, unluckily for the bishop's character as a prophet, the prediction was not fulfilled.

CHAP. XXVII.

SONSONATE.

Situation and Climate. — The People and their Occupations. Daily Consumption of Provisions. — High School and Primary Schools. — Padre José Maria Navarro. — The Volcano of Isalco. — Active Volcanos less dangerous than those supposed extinct. — State of the Clergy. — Indian Population. — Tlaskaltek Settlements. — The Harbour of Acajutla. — Excursion to the Chavias. — Tropical Gardens and European Fields. — Plans for the New Capital. — The Valley of Santa Tecla.

It may be remembered that I had just arrived at Sonsonate when I interrupted the narrative of my journey to insert Dr. Wagner's account of the destruction of San Salvador. It lies only sixty miles from the capital of the republic of San Salvador, and is one of the most considerable towns, having been, under the Spanish rule, the chief place of the province; it was founded in 1524, by Pedro Alvacado, on his conquering march through Cuscatlan, and received from him the pious title of Santissima Trinidad. Its advan-

tageous position, the fertility of the soil, and the vicinity of the Pacific Ocean, occasioned it to advance rapidly; it is, indeed, one of the oldest sea-ports of Central America; and, very soon after the conquest, carried on a considerable trade with the mother country in indigo and the precious metals.

Its position is very pleasant, as it is divided by a fine river, the Rio Grande, into two parts, surrounded by gardens in which the most magnificent tropical plants flourish; and has a range of mountains, a branch of the Cordilleras, in the background, from which the barren volcano of Isalco rises like a gigantic watch-tower, serving as a landmark for sailors far out at sea. The climate is very hot, but dry and equable, the thermometer never falling below 79°, and averaging 83°, Fahr.; but, high as the temperature is, the climate is not unhealthy, as the frequent north winds and the sea-breezes greatly refresh the air. The population, according to a census taken by the Spaniards, amounted in 1790 to 3,425, and it is now only 4,470, mostly Mestizos, who are distributed through 879 one-storied habitations. Some of the municipal authorities have given themselves the trouble to analyse the constituents

of the population, and classify them according to occupations; and as such a document is a great rarity in this country, I will give the results of their labours, and show, at least in one instance, of what materials a Central American community is composed. We find in this *Estadistica*, that at the end of the year 1853 there were in Sonsonate—

1 Lawyer.	4 Midwives.
2 Physicians.	91 Men Servants.
2 Apothecaries.	252 Women Servants.
2 Priests.	18 Salters.
2 Teachers.	6 Fishermen.
2 Surgeons.	17 Fireworkmakers.
3 Barbers.	19 Masons.
65 Carpenters.	2 Painters.
24 Locksmiths.	1 Combmaker.
9 Silversmiths.	3 Tanners.
60 Tailors.	11 Straw Hatmakers.
60 Shoemakers.	4 Coachmakers.
41 Retail Tradesmen.	3 Embroidresses.
11 Musicians.	38 Bakers.
27 Brickmakers.	17 Soap Boilers.
1 Saddler.	109 Agriculturists.
3 Millers.	255 Day Labourers.
436 Seamstresses.	17 Camel Drivers.
22 Flowermakers.	3 Distillers.
160 Washerwomen.	19 Weavers.

Besides these, we find mentioned 27 sick persons in the Hospital, 98 women of known bad character, 255 children at school, and 12 students in foreign universities.

The daily amount of food required for the population of the town is stated by the same authority to be 3 cwt. of rice, 30 cwt. of black beans, 8 cwt. of wheat flour, 3 dozen of fowls, 50 lbs. of fish, 176 dozen of eggs, 155 cwt. of maize, 5 oxen, 5 pigs, 4 cwt. of lard, 68 bottles of milk, 1 cwt. of ground coffee, 250 bottles of native brandy, and 27 bottles of French, 40 bottles of French wine, 2 cwt. of cheese, 6 cwt. of salt; besides fruit and vegetables, the whole cost of which, including cigars, is estimated at 1,250 dollars.

In 1841 a High school was established, but it was abolished six years afterwards, although its results were by no means unsatisfactory. Probably the failure of this attempt is to be attributed only to a deficiency of funds; and the inhabitants of the town complain that many a poor youth who cannot afford to visit one of the universities in the neighbouring states, has no means of gratifying his thirst for knowledge; but those who know how wretchedly insufficient the teaching at such institutions sometimes is,

and what incapable persons are often appointed to the offices in them, will not be much inclined to join the good people of Sonsonate in their regrets.

It is not so much the number as the quality of institutions for learning that is of importance; and, for a State like San Salvador, one in the capital is amply sufficient, if only properly endowed, and its appointments filled by adequate instructors. True talents and thirst for knowledge will always find their way to the springs, in spite of such obstacles as local distance, and will often reach the goal sooner than those born under apparently more favourable circumstances. The Primary schools of Sonsonate are well-conducted and numerously attended; and in general, in San Salvador, a larger proportion of the population has received elementary education, than in any other of the four Republics of Central America.

Amongst the humanitary institutions, the Hospital of San Juan de Dios deserves especial mention. Since the year 1830, it has been established in the former Franciscan convent, and it is, with the single exception of that of Hermandad de Caridad, in the state of Guatemala, the

best managed establishment of the kind that I have ever seen in these countries. In the year 1853, 146 patients (88 men and 58 women) were received into its spacious and lofty apartments, and 89 were dismissed cured. The most numerous class of maladies is apparently that of intermittent fevers; and lock-jaw, from the effects of suddenly suppressed perspiration, is an affection not uncommon here. The whole cost of the attendance on, and care of, the patients during this year is given at 259 dollars.

Sonsonate has no fine public buildings, and the frequent convulsive agitations of the earth make the erection of such very unadvisable; the churches are insignificant, and such as there are, look decayed and ruinous, even the Cathedral forming no exception. There are, however, private houses which, though low and plain outside, are very comfortable within, and show many traces of the old Castilian opulence; such, for instance, is the house of Dr. Drivon, an English physician long resident here, and also those inhabited by Mr. Foot, the British consul, and the American consul, Mr. Henry Savage.

As soon as I had recovered a little from my indisposition, I went to pay a visit to a priest

who holds a benefice here, a Don José Maria Navarro, who had been represented to me as a highly cultivated man, from whose acquaintance I promised myself many additions to my stock of knowledge concerning the people and the country.

This ecclesiastic was by birth a Mexican, had been an officer in the Mexican army, and had even been married, but after the death of his wife, he entered the church, though he kept his two daughters with him, and now lived with them under the same roof in the former Dominican Convent.

From the window of Don José's study I could see the fiery column of the Isalco, and hear its subterranean rumbling like distant thunder. This volcano first rose above the plain on the 23rd of February, 1770, after the inhabitants of the district had been for months terrified by earthquakes and subterranean noises; and since that time it has been almost uninterruptedly vomiting ashes and red-hot minerals, until it has risen to a stately cone of 2,500 feet high. Until five years ago, the priest informed me, the eruptions had followed one another with perfect regularity every two minutes; at present it

ejects its fiery contents every eight or ten minutes, throwing them to a height of thirty or forty feet, whence they fall back again into the crater. Its form has in some measure changed of late years, and it no longer exhibits the same beautifully regular conical outline, but has now three peaks, and has made itself two new openings; but these may all be regarded as so many safety-valves, and an apparently dead volcano may often be a far more dangerous neighbour than one in full activity — as appears, indeed, from the earthquake of San Salvador. The volcano near the city had long been supposed to be entirely extinct, and it is covered to the very summit with luxuriant vegetation, so that the accumulated gases, vainly seeking an outlet, violently rushed in an opposite direction, shooting and bursting through the solid crust of the earth as they went, and the destruction of the capital was the consequence; while Sonsonate, lying close to the ever-active volcano of Isalco, suffered scarcely any injury, and only felt very slight shocks. The thunder of the Isalco can be heard, I was assured, for eighteen miles round.

Don José appeared by no means satisfied with the condition of the Church or of the people;

and the payment of the "religious offering" that was to serve as a substitute for the tithes is, it seems, so much neglected, that the proverbial poverty of a "Church mouse" may be extended also to the priest serving it.

The natives of the country are described by the Padre as an entirely degenerate race, for whom nothing is to be hoped but by an infusion of a more vigorous element from the north. "It is well," he said, "that they are by nature and climate so lazy, for it is the only thing that prevents their becoming finished villains; the necessary energy is wanting, but not the inclination, though it is only justice to add that the whites are greatly to blame for this deplorable state of things. There is no greater poison for an Indian than a white (*no hay veneno por el Indio que el ladino*); and wherever the two meet, the brown aboriginal goes to ruin."

At the time of the conquest by the Spaniards, the country was inhabited by a wild, rude, ugly race, called Pipils, whose language bore so much resemblance to the Mexicans, as to be regarded as a dialect of it; and it seems not improbable that they may have been immigrants from the lower classes of the Mexicans, as, besides their

language, there was much in their social customs and religious practices to support the conjecture, though Mr. Squier has offered the opposite one, namely, that the population of Mexico originally proceeded from the south. The circumstance that upon Gemelli's chart of the Indian Migrations, the original seat of the Aztecs, or Mexicans, is marked, by a pyramidal temple and a palm tree, the characteristic symbols of the torrid zone, is certainly a remarkable fact, but hardly sufficient to support the hypothesis.

In many parts of San Salvador,—for instance, in Isalco, Mexicanos, and Nahuisalco,—there are still living Indians of the race of Tlaskalteks, who came with Pedro Alvarado from Mexico, and whose settlement in the newly-acquired territory of the Spaniards is supposed to have been encouraged by them on political motives, in order that the differences of language and manners among the people might render any concert and co-operation against the common enemy more difficult. This would explain why, at various points of Central America, we find a tribe speaking the language of Montezuma, amongst others entirely ignorant of it.

The Tlaskalteks in the first period after the

invasion, acted as allies of the Spaniards, regarding them as unconquerable gods, against whom it was useless to contend, and, in many subsequent expeditions of the Spanish adventurers, served them as faithful companions, and materially assisted them to get possession of the country, — enjoying, in return, sundry privileges above the other races, such as that of not paying, like all other Indians, a tribute to the crown of Castile. I endeavoured, during my stay in San Salvador, to procure in the villages above mentioned some of the root-words of the Tlaskaltek language, and did collect as many as 180.

Five leagues south-west from Sonsonate lies the harbour of Acajutla, to which, across magnificent fields, lies a tolerably convenient road. It was discovered by Pedro Alvarado in 1584, on his journey to Peru, and for a long time there was no other port on the west coast between Realejo and Acapulco. Two-thirds of the exported products of the country still go by it; but it is anything but favourably situated, and offers little protection to ships; though some works are now going on, particularly a sea-wall, under the superintendence of the enter-

prising Dr. Drivon, at the cost of the San Salvador government, by which the inconveniences that have hitherto been felt by vessels entering the port will be considerably diminished.

Before leaving Sonsonate to continue my journey to Guatemala, where I intended making a long stay, I went in the company of my excellent host, Dr. Ypiña, on some excursions in the environs, to various *Fincas* or Chacras, as they are called in the country,—gardens, of which almost every tolerably opulent inhabitant of Sonsonate possesses one, where he cultivates all kinds of nutritious plants and fruits, and passes most of the dry season. With the boundless fertility of the soil and equability of the climate, they require very little attention; and indeed too much care would rather do them harm than good. Indescribably beautiful are these pieces of land, covered with all possible varieties of tropical plants, and very different indeed from the cultivated fields of the northern zone. It seems very ungrateful, but I must own I never could be much charmed with the sight of a corn-field, nor, notwithstanding a decided taste for plums, peaches, and apricots, could I take any particular pleasure in the gnarled, crippled

forms of our fruit-trees. The farmer, who judges of the beauty of a piece of ground entirely by its power of production, will doubtless find much to admire in these fruit-laden dwarfs; but a disinterested spectator can hardly join in his raptures; while in the tropics the most ordinary cultivated plants have an imposing aspect, and the grandeur of the impression is increased by their exuberant variety.

You see the Paradise fig, with its gigantic leaves, the cacao and coffee trees, the vanilla, the cocoa-palm, the sugar-cane, cotton, indigo, rice, &c., all blooming in rich variety together. Maize yields three crops a year, as in most of the other lowlands of Central America, and produces five hundred-fold. The cultivated plants of the northern zone do not flourish here; and even for the Peruvian potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), though a southern plant, the climate is too hot, and the soil too rich; but there is a kind of native potato (*Papa criolla*) which, as well as the sweet potato, yuccas, yams, and similar tubers, furnish delicious food for the natives. These roots are produced in such abundance, that they have indeed very little commercial value; for you may buy what will supply the wants of a

family for a week with a few dozen of cacao-beans, which here, as well as in Nicaragua and Costa Rica, serve as a medium of exchange for articles of small value, passing for less than the smallest coin of the country. For a *Medio Real* you get forty-five cacao beans; and for twenty of these beans, as many bananas, mangoes, aquacates, &c., as you can scarcely get through in several days. In most of the Fincas I did not see more than three or four labourers at work, and these men live entirely on vegetables, in simple huts made of reeds and palm-leaves. Maize, beans, yuccas, and bananas, are here, as well as in the neighbouring states, the principal food of the natives; and without having lived in the country, it is scarcely possible to imagine how few and simple are the wants of these people.

My host, Dr. Ypiña, showed me always the kindest attention; and when he heard that I was an Austrian, he took advantage of my absence one day to read up in a hurry, from a Spanish Encyclopædia, all the information it contained touching my native imperial city. Some hours afterwards, when we met at dinner, he began, all at once, to talk of the Prater and the *Bastei*, Schönbrunn and Lauenburg, the *Volksgarten*,

the Burg-Theatre, and many other places of recreation, till I was quite astonished at his learning. I soon found out the source of his wonderful familiarity with the state of Vienna; but the compliment was no less friendly and acceptable. He was a great contrast too to most of the New Spaniards I have known, in the circumstance that his courtesy was not merely found on his lips, but influenced every action, and the slightest wish that I expressed met always with immediate attention; so that I should have passed a most happy time in Sonsonate, but for the uncertain state of my health and the agitation and confusion occasioned by the destruction of San Salvador.

I met scarcely any one who was not more or less affected by this terrible calamity, who had not relations or friends to mourn for, or who did not consider the position of the country most materially affected by the ruin of the capital,—lately the most populous place in the republic, the centre of its trade and industry, its intellectual and social life, but now scattered to all the winds of heaven. People were busy discussing the question of where the new capital was to be built, and as usual they manifested a lamentable

difference of opinion. Innumerable plans and projects for the purpose were sent in to the government, most of them evidently dictated by motives of private interest rather than by any view towards the public welfare. Whoever was possessed of a large piece of land, was sure to represent it as the best possible for the purpose, and could not imagine that any other could offer similar or superior advantages; but it is but justice to San Martin's government to state that they went to work in a very careful and conscientious manner in the examination of these proposals, and called in the aid of the best scientific knowledge at their disposal. My travelling companion, Dr. Wagner, was invited, among others, to join the commission appointed to investigate the claims of the various places proposed; and, after long debating and consultation, the decision was at last made in favour of the beautiful highland valley or plain of Santa Tecla, nine miles from the former capital, and on a spot where the late fatal catastrophe had done little injury, though it lies nearer to the volcano of San Salvador than the city recently destroyed, separating its crater from the more southern elevation, which assumes the

usual semicircular form. After an exact measurement of its area, it has been found to contain eight *Caballerias** of flat ground, gently inclining to the east, and elevated 3000 feet above the sea, with the advantage of abundance of water, which is in general somewhat scarce in San Salvador during the dry season. There are four small streams formed by springs, rising in the valley itself, and the little river Realango flows near it; besides that, on digging, good water is found at a depth of only twenty-four feet below the surface.

In the first excitement the people eagerly supported the government in their praiseworthy intentions of founding the new capital at Santa Tecla; but when we left Central America at the end of 1854, it appeared, nevertheless, very doubtful whether the plan would ever be carried into effect. The surveys had been made, and the former President of the Republic, Señor Dueñas, was preparing for a journey to Europe,

* A caballeria = 128 English acres, was a portion of land which, after the conquest of a country, the Spaniards were accustomed to bestow on a horse-soldier who had served in the war.

in order to negotiate in France or England a loan of a million of piastres for the principal public edifices; but New Spanish indolence and petty notions of economy interfered with the execution of the plan, and many families were returning to the ruins of the old capital, with the strange intention of building there again for the *sixth time*, the place having been already five times destroyed*;—so strongly do men cling to the spot on which they are born.

* In a MS. in the Dominican Convent of San Salvador, which I had occasion to examine, it was stated that the town was totally destroyed four times, and rebuilt exactly on the same spot. The first calamity of the kind was in 1594, the second in 1658; of the third catastrophe the exact date is not given, but it is stated that the convent was rebuilt after it by voluntary alms; the fourth was on the 6th of March, 1719, when the destruction of the city is said to have been almost the work of a moment. The monks had to build a large rancho to shelter them; and a kind of hermitage, thatched with palm-leaves, served for two years as a church.

CHAP. XXVIII.

RAMBLES ON THE WEST COAST.

State of Things in San Salvador before the Earthquake. — Influence of the Civil Wars on the Character of the Inhabitants. — The Port of La Union. — From La Union to San Miguel. — Night Quarters in a Sambo Family. — Groundless Fears. — Character of the Coast Plains. — The Town of San Miguel and its Volcano. — Glance at the Highlands. — Poverty of the People. — San Vicente. The old Volcano. — The Town of Cojutepeque. — The provisional Seat of Government.

At the time when I was travelling in the State of San Salvador, the country was in a state of complete exhaustion — wearied to death of the long continuance of anarchy, and longing for repose and peace; not even the plan for the establishment of the Central American Federation seemed any longer to awaken the least interest, although this little state had formerly taken the principal part in that struggle.

To heal the wounds inflicted on the country by party strife, — to see the abandoned and

desolate fields again under cultivation,—the culture of indigo, and the trade which had formerly prospered here more than anywhere else in Central America, once more reviving, and to restore the almost annihilated credit of the republic,—these were the objects to which all the cultivated or semi-cultivated inhabitants looked with their most fervent wishes. It was this deep feeling of the need of rest that led in 1851 to the election of the advocate Dueñas, probably not only the most intelligent man in the country, but the one who possessed most of the strength of character indispensable to the office of President; and, under his rule, an amount of peace and security unusual in this unhappy land was really attained. The democratic party was defeated; the bands of robbers driven from the roads, and the Indians among them induced to return peacefully to their pueblos, and to the agricultural labours for which they are much better fitted by nature than for the irregular and dangerous occupation of the highwayman.

The Indians here are generally more intelligent and industrious, as well as more peacefully disposed, than in any other part of Spanish

America with which I am acquainted. They have indeed some tendency to petty theft; but nothing less than the long horrors which followed the throwing off the Spanish yoke, and the everlasting confusion, party strife, and anarchy in which the country has been involved, could have corrupted them so thoroughly as to turn them into banditti. But civil war and forced military service have proved a very suitable apprenticeship to that trade, though they have no great natural aptitude for it.

The energetic administration of Dueñas did, in a great measure, succeed in compelling the vagabonds among the Ladinos to overcome their disinclination to work; for there was no possibility of robbery on a great scale, and in a small way the business did not yield sufficient profit for them. The culture of indigo revived, and the markets of San Miguel were once more pretty numerously frequented by foreign traders; but still there was no real confidence in the stability of the government, and no faith in the duration of peace. Capitalists remained anxious and uneasy; the government could procure no loan; in the larger indigo plantations, formerly doing such profitable business, there was a com-

plete stagnation; and the introduction of coffee-growing, which had given such an impulse to public prosperity in Costa Rica, was here not to be thought of, for the coffee-tree, as is known, does not in tropical America yield in less than three years.* Things had indeed improved, but still people's minds were harassed by doubt and the dread of impending evil.

This was the state of affairs in the republic when I found myself at La Union, one of the best and most secure ports on the Pacific Ocean, for the cession of which negotiations have from time to time been going on with the United States. The Americans have offered as much as

* It is this circumstance that stands in the way of the introduction of this highly lucrative branch of culture, for in these uncertain countries no one likes to have his capital locked up for three years. Coffee flourishes best here, as it does in Jamaica, at a height of 4000 or 5000 feet, and would probably produce more abundant crops, though not of so fine a quality, for the plateaux and valleys of San Salvador do not rise on an average above from 1800 to 2400 feet. The soil, however, is the richest in the whole isthmus, thanks to the ashes and mud streams that have been thrown over it in former times by its mostly extinct volcanoes. In the neighbourhood of San Salvador, maize has been known to yield the astonishing produce of four harvests in the year.

a million of dollars for it; but the government of San Salvador, even when its financial distress has been at its worst, could not resolve to give up the best port in the country to the "natural enemies of the Spanish race;" although temptations and intrigues to that end have not been wanting in which certain statesmen, desirous of managing the affair, have had a keen eye to their private interest. After the catastrophe of the Easter nights of May, 1854, the subject was again brought under discussion, as the financial difficulties of the republic had become extremely pressing; but again the attempt failed, chiefly from a well-grounded distrust of the men in power, who are here Spanish Creoles, and not Ladinos.

The small town of La Union lies on steeply-inclined beds of trachyte conglomerate, which are a formation of the mud stream from the great volcano of Conchagua in the vicinity, and consist of broken fragments of trachyte porphyry and volcanic ashes cemented together, and falling abruptly down on the side next the gulf. The town contains a few tile-roofed stone houses; but the greater part of the habitations are wretched huts, thatched with palm-leaves, in

which dwells a scanty population of poor yellow-looking people, suffering much from heat, fever, and stomach complaints.

The climate of La Union passes for one of the hottest in tropical America; and though free from yellow fever, the place is very liable to very malignant fevers of the intermittent kind, which slowly destroy the vital powers.

There are some prosperous Italian merchants living at La Union, who every year send off to Genoa vessels laden with indigo, dye-woods, and skins, and bring back in return European manufactures, which they send partly to the market of San Miguel, and partly to various little points on the coast of the neighbour republics. Amongst the busiest of these Italian merchants is the Genoese Francisco Carpaneto, who, during the last revolutionary struggle in Italy, acted as adjutant to the celebrated Garibaldi, and, after Rome was taken by the French, escaped to America. By his energy and industry in business he has since become a rich man, and the owner of several ships which visit all the ports of the Panama coast as far as Istapa in Guatemala.

As I intended making a journey into the

interior from La Union, I made inquiries whether it would be safe to cross the mountains in the company of a single Indian guide, if well armed; and I was told I might do so, but that it would be necessary to be on my guard, and never to go out without my fire-arms. Great bands of robbers were not now to be feared, "thanks to the firmness of the President;" but there would be here and there single robbers and murderers lurking about, against whom it was desirable to use both caution and good weapons. In the immediate environs, indeed, no man ever went out without arms; and even the little Indian boys, driving their laden mules to market, were never without their long, heavy, sabre-shaped machetes, which they carried naked in the hand.

On account of the intolerable heat, I did not set out on my journey till towards evening; and my only companion was a good-natured but stupid-looking Indian, who rode one of the beasts of burden. I certainly did not think he looked like one who would murder me in my sleep, but it seemed likely that in case of an attack I need not look for much assistance from him.

My quarters the first night were at a spot where two poor Sambo families occupied some cane huts; and among them were some well-grown, rather handsome girls, who were busy till a late hour kneading tortillas. They willingly allowed the wandering stranger to swing his hammock under some cocoa-palms near the huts; but warned me that the position was not free from danger, as the heavy cocoa-nuts when quite ripe would now and then come tumbling down from the tops of the trees, and might chance to fall on my head. Tortillas, eggs, cheese, and bananas were procurable here; but more than this the poor people had not to offer. Milk was not to be had, the very little yielded by the cows in this dry season being kept by the owners for themselves, as it is a favourite article of food with them.

During the night I noticed that there were two men standing near the spot where I was bivouaced, and carrying on a whispered conversation that I could not understand; and my imagination having been somewhat excited on the subject, I immediately supposed they were planning to murder me; and even long after they had gone back into the hut, I

kept my hand upon my pistol, though for aught I know they were as innocent of any thoughts of murder as I was myself. But my probably groundless alarm had driven sleep from my eyes, and I lay for a long time gazing up into the starry sky that glittered above the palm-trees in tranquil, tropical magnificence; but at last my weariness overcame my fears, and when I woke at daylight, in good preservation and not at all murdered, I could not help laughing at the panic engendered by night and solitude. My Sambo host pocketed very contentedly the reals I gave him for my accommodation, and I proceeded on my journey quite unmolested.

In the plains of this hot region the character of the scenery is everywhere pretty much the same, with the exception of the small strip of land called the Balsam Coast, between Puerto Libertad and Sonsonate, where nature displays the full magnificence of the equatorial zone. In other parts of this coast region of San Salvador, you miss, especially during the verano, or dry season, the exuberant abundance both of vegetable and animal life that distinguishes the lowlands of Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala. No troops of stags are seen in the savannahs, and no jaguars

and pumas roar in the woods; at most, you only see one here and there in the district of the Balsam Coast. The large and somewhat dangerous, but exceeding savoury, wild swine are also wanting in San Salvador; and even monkeys and parrots are scarce and shy. This scarcity of animal life, and the light character of the woods, confirm the historical statement that a tolerably dense population once inhabited this district, by which the primeval forest was cut down, and the wild beasts driven away. Now, it has once more become a wilderness; but the charm of the primitive one has been lost.

The town of San Miguel lies in a hot, unhealthy plain, near the foot of the volcano of the same name. It has regular streets, and convenient houses built and fitted up in the new Spanish style, with verandas, galleries, and interior courts; some handsome churches, many shops, and a large open square where the market is held, and where, from morning till night, you may see hundreds of Indians, both men and women, crouching on the ground, and offering for sale the little productions of their gardens and of their industry, which they exchange here for articles of clothing, tobacco, and especially brandy.

The actual inhabitants of the town are almost all either Spanish Creoles or Ladinos. Hospitality does not appear to be one of their pre-eminent virtues; and as there is no such thing as an inn in the city, I and my laden mules had to wander about the streets a considerable time before I could obtain a shelter, which I did, at last, in the house of a rich Creole lady.

San Miguel was, under the Spanish colonial dominion, a much more wealthy, important, and populous place than it is at present; and when Herrera wrote his history, there were in the neighbourhood no less than eighty Indian villages, and its markets were kept busy with the indigo that flourishes so admirably in the district. Even yet, the three fairs of San Miguel, held in March, May, and November, give the town some importance in the eyes of the traders of the Pacific. Indigo is still the principal article of export, though the trade is trifling to what it once was: cattle and hides are also exported; but the principal market for them is held at Tianque, a place a league and a half off. The imports are the various manufactures of Europe, French and Spanish wines, and even colonial

produce, with the exception of sugar, which is grown in the country itself.

From San Miguel to Chinamega, which lies on a high steppe of the Cordillera, the road is a continual ascent; and the grand-looking, isolated volcano of San Miguel lies all the way to the left, and is visible to a great distance out at sea. It is one of the most active, and at the same time most treacherous, of the burning mountains of South America; sometimes lying several years together in the most complete repose, emitting only a little thin smoke from its summit, not visible from below, — and then all at once bursting out with the most terrific fury, and pouring down flowing streams of basaltic lava, laying waste the plains below, and even threatening the environs of the town. Seen from the south, this volcano forms a beautiful symmetrical cone, equally steep on all sides; but, viewed from the high terraces of the north, it is less regularly formed, and its summit appears jagged like that of the Mombacho.

Half a mile from the large Indian village of Chinamega, which lies in the cauldron of a volcanic crater of elevation, I had a most splendid view over a great extent of country to the highlands of San Salvador in the north-west,

with the chain of the Cordillera in the background, and the volcanic cones in the middle distance; and on the other side over the low terraces and the environs of Fonseca Bay to the east and north-east. Further than the eye could reach in every direction lay the products of volcanic activity and the scenes of volcanic destructiveness — circular island-like groups of mountains, clearly defined craters of elevation, mighty cones, enormous masses of scoriæ, and smaller pyramidal trachyte hills which have been burst through and then left without any further manifestation of eruptive force.

Rain seldom falls in this country till the middle of April, and not till May in sufficient quantity to call forth again the green covering of the earth. The effects of the long civil wars are everywhere visible in the villages, and the people in this part of San Salvador have a very wretched appearance, Ladinos as well as Indians inhabiting poor little mud hovels, with straw roofs, and without windows; pantile roofs, so common in Costa Rica, are here the indications of an unusual degree of opulence. A single apartment serves not only for kitchen, sitting-

room, and bed-room, but for pigsty, and for keeping fowls. Chairs and tables, which in Costa Rica are found in the dwellings of the poorest inhabitants, are here quite unknown; even the swinging hammock is wanting, and its place is supplied by a miserable-looking bedstead made of an ox-hide, while the swarms of vermin, especially fleas, make these huts almost intolerable. There is not either much hospitality or friendliness among the people to make amends for these inconveniences, though they never refuse a stranger a night's shelter if he ask for it. Tortillas, beans, and eggs were to be had for money; but fodder for mules was very scarce, and even the water from the well had to be paid for.

After five days' journeying, I arrived at the banks of the river Lempa, above Tecapa. The stream is here very deep, with high picturesque banks, and on the opposite shore horizontal strata of marl are laid bare. A very frail ferry-boat carried us and our animals across; and on the right bank we found some little public-houses kept by Ladinos, where we got a tolerably good meal for very good payment.

San Vicente is a pleasant little town lying

almost in the centre of the plateau, in the cauldron of a fine crater of elevation, and close to the foot of the cone of eruption of the volcano of San Vicente, apparently long since extinct. Like all the towns of Central America, it has straight broad streets, a bad pavement, and broad low houses, with spacious courts. The Plaza, or square, forms a tolerably regular quadrangle, which boasts a church,—a highly ornamental edifice, quite overladen with Corinthian pilasters and other decorations; but the true ornament of the place is a large beautiful stone fountain, rather a rarity in a Central American city. All over the square the life and bustle of the market is going on; people are boiling and roasting, and dirty Indian women display their sweet wares; in short, the whole life of the town concentrates itself on this spot.

The ancient volcano rises to the south-west of the town, with its crater in perfect preservation; the declivities are easy to climb, being partly overgrown with low shrubs, and partly savannah, the rich vegetable covering of which is entirely burnt up by the end of March. Old trachytic lava-streams extend from this mountain in a westerly and north-westerly direction,

and cover with their masses the semicircular wall of the actual crater of elevation; but within the historical period no eruptive activity of this mountain has been recorded.

The little town of Cojutepeque, where the government took refuge after the destruction of San Salvador, lies considerably higher than San Vicente, at the foot of the small trachyte cone of scoriæ, called Perulapam, which is visible a long way off, from its isolated position, and is striking from its symmetrical form.

Between Cojutepec and San Salvador the physiognomy of the landscape undergoes a change: it is animated by the beautiful lake of San Martin or Tlopango; and the country here becomes more populous, and the Indian villages larger and better planted. Bananas and cocoa-palms, the dark rich shade of the mangoes, the melon-trees with their beautifully indented leaves, form the chief ornaments of the gardens, and veil with their lovely forms the misery of the human habitations.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE GULF OF FONSECA. — RESEMBLANCE TO THAT OF SAN FRANCISCO. — EXTENT.

Geological Interest of the Environs. — Ascent of the Volcano of Cosiguina from the Seaside. — Comparison of the Crater with those of the Volcanoes of Western Asia. — The last Eruption. — A Subterranean Battle. — Influence of the Phenomenon on the Animal World. — Wild Flight of the Population. — Living Priests and Dead Saints. — Extent of the Detonation Circle, and of the Fall of the Showers of Ashes.

The Gulf or Bay of Fonseca (marked on Bailly's map as the Bay of Conchagua), is a possession which is shared by the three republics, Nicaragua, Honduras, and San Salvador, and is undoubtedly the finest natural harbour of the Pacific Ocean, and derives additional importance from the circumstance that it will probably be the entrance of the future Isthmus Canal and the central staple place for the future trade of the world in this quarter. In space, depth, security, and in the varied structure of the coast, it excels

even the renowned Gulf of San Francisco; but the two have a striking resemblance in their conformation, as may best be seen in the map of Sir Edward Belcher, of which Mr. Squier has availed himself for his map of Nicaragua, where he gives the outline of the gulf more accurately than do the maps of Bailly and Berghaus.

The greatest length of the Gulf of Fonseca is estimated at eighty miles, and its greatest breadth at thirty-eight. Tongues of land, mostly covered with volcanic rocks, project in various directions into it, and protect the several anchoring-grounds from every gust of wind, as well as from the strong surf of the Pacific, which, further north, is the despair of all navigators who enter those bad harbours.

Although the whole gulf forms, in fact, one wide roadstead, in which all the fleets of the world could find abundant room to anchor, particular parts of it are especially adapted to facilitate the intercourse with the coast in various directions. The fine harbour of La Union, belonging to San Salvador, is protected from the storms of the west by the volcano of Conchagua. The island of Tigre, belonging to Honduras, and that of Sacate, which is in dispute between

Honduras and San Salvador, have both excellent harbours; but the southern part of the gulf near the land is less deep, and at the mouth of the Estero, which runs like a natural canal far into the land, the anchorage is only adapted for vessels of small draught. On the other hand, the great peninsula of Cosiguina, which projects in a north-westerly direction into the sea, offers the most perfect security for the largest fleets, that may anchor at some distance from Nacascolo —the part of the gulf belonging to Nicaragua.

The praise bestowed by Mr. Squier on this magnificent bay appears by no means exaggerated; and his opinion was confirmed to me by all the ships' captains whom I questioned in Realejo and La Union, and who had been acquainted with the coast for many years. They all, including the above-named experienced Genoese Carpaneto, declared that it was scarcely possible there should be a bay more convenient for commerce and navigation, and that it could be entered with any one of the prevailing winds. Many of the small rivers that fall into the gulf are navigable for steamers of small draught, and particularly the Rio Choluteca, in the Honduras territory; and in most places on the coast, and

even in the larger islands, good fresh water is to be had. Beyond the rocky ledge of the shore there extend far into Honduras and San Salvador immense plains of the greatest fertility; in the latter partly cultivated, in the former bearing a luxuriant forest vegetation alternating with savannahs. Should the proposed Isthmus Canal be really executed, the flat piece of land stretching from Lake Managua to the gulf between the chain of the Cordillera and the volcanic range of Marabios, offers special advantages; and in this case the river Estero could be turned to account, and the awkward sandbank at its mouth be avoided by a side canal in a northerly direction.

The environs of the Gulf of Fonseca are of extraordinary interest for the geologist; and there is no region of the earth where, within a similar extent of surface, such a mass of volcanic formations and effects can be witnessed. All that I have seen in Southern Italy, Asia Minor, Armenia, or even in Guatemala, of the tremendous reaction of the interior of the earth upon its outward crust, can bear no comparison with what this country exhibits. A glance from the heights of the Tigre Island, the volcano of

Conchagua, or some one of the trachyte cones which rise in many parts of the bay, will show a wide panorama of what has been created and destroyed by the fiery powers, — extinct or still smoking craters, — beds of lava and mud, — deposits of ashes, tuffa, and rapilli, — a scene of which the gloomy grandeur is indescribable.

The Isalco lies some days' journey north-west of the gulf; but its southern shore is almost touched by the declivity of another, the Cosiguina, which, though it has been perfectly quiet since the last eruption, is pronounced by geologists to be one of the most tremendous volcanoes on our planet.

I ascended the Cosiguina from the shore of the Pacific, outside the bay, where the surf is so violent that it is only possible to land in very tranquil weather and with a south wind. The landscape towards the south-east, in the direction of Chinandega, is a bushy wilderness, with no sign of human habitation but a few Indian huts. The soil is covered far and wide with scoriæ, ashes, and other ejected matter. The mountain had formerly a cone on the north side, which was wooded to the summit, but it was overthrown in the last eruption; and on the

same spot there opened the yawning abyss, whence issued all the masses of solid and crushed mineral substances that cover the face of the country, but not any melted lava.

The crater is a Spanish league, or three miles, in circumference,—the largest that I have ever seen in an active volcano; it is surrounded by steep walls, whose strangely rent and jagged outline, when seen from below, alone indicate the character of the mountain. No clouds of vapour or smoke have for years been seen over the Cosiguina, even from the sea; and when I was there, probably no one had ascended it since the visit of the British Consul, Manning, and Sir Edward Belcher, in 1835, and it was believed that the opening was again entirely closed. I observed, nevertheless, from many clefts and chasms at the bottom of the crater, and especially at the foot of the interior wall, thin whitish-grey clouds of steam rising, which could not have been seen from below. In many places in the interior of the crater, too, the ground was hot; and when sometimes we sank up to our knees in the loose rapilli, we got the soles of our shoes burnt. The crater is very deep, only accessible on the north side, and the scenery

of a wild sublimity of character exceeding that of any of the volcanoes of Western Asia.

There is no tradition concerning the former activity of the volcano; but the body of the mountain consists of porphyritic trachyte or andesit, like most of the volcanoes of the Andes, whilst the new ejections contain more augite and basaltic matter.

Of the ancient lava-streams there are only traces remaining in the plain on the east side. Probably most of them have been covered by the scoriæ of the last eruption. Extensive formations of tuffa and conglomerate — certain indications of former eruptions of ashes and mud — are seen in many places, partly covered with the products of the eruption of 1835. A former inhabitant of this region, who has since moved to Chinandega, told me that subterranean noises were frequently heard before that year, and that they were sometimes so loud as to give warning of the re-awakening of the volcano. Towards the close of 1834, slight shocks of earthquake too had been felt at old Chinandega, accompanied by rumbling noises; and they continued, without exciting much attention, till the middle of January, when they suddenly ceased,

and for some days the mountain lay in the profoundest repose.

On the morning of the 20th of January, a loud noise was heard as from salvos of innumerable artillery, apparently proceeding from various parts of the gulf; and an enormous coal-black cloud rolled up high above the summit of Cosiguina, which was entirely concealed by it. Every one noticed this cloud, but no one appeared to divine its cause, or whence it proceeded.

The cloud, however, spread with terrible rapidity, filling the whole atmosphere, and soon rendering it as dark as the interior of a mine; the sun disappeared as completely as if it had been annihilated; the approach of night could only be told by the clock, and it was a night enlivened by no moon or star. All the heavenly bodies appeared to have been blotted out, and the candles and torches that were kindled shone but feebly for a few yards, so that the inhabitants of the same house went about groping and calling for one another in the awful gloom.

To the terrors of this total darkness, resembling that described in Exodus as falling on the Egyptians, was soon added another still more oppressive to the vital powers;—the atmosphere became

filled with a fine ash, which pained the eyes more than the most intense light, and made it scarcely possible to breathe; and people were obliged to dip handkerchiefs in water and hold them to their mouths as the only method of procuring any air fit to take into the lungs. At intervals was heard a tremendous roar of subterranean artillery, as if a thousand cannon were fired together — and the noise from the gulf side was like that of a naval engagement, in which all the navies of the world were contending — the detonations being heard for several hundred miles. The lower animals were as much terrified as men; herds of cattle belonging to old Chinandega, came rushing out of the fields into the town, and wild beasts mingled pell mell with them, without attempting to harm them. As in the days of the Deluge, universal terror had established universal peace; and panthers, pumas, and cuyotes, fled with troops of deer from the woods and joined the flocks of goats and sheep without attempting to attack them; while hawks and eagles perched upon the house-tops quietly among the pigeons; and the very owls and bats fled from their hiding places, as if even for those night-loving creatures, the volcanic darkness

was too thick and oppressive; the wildest animals seemed quite to have lost their ordinary fear of man. There were afterwards found between Chinandega and the gulf the dead bodies of thousands of animals, especially birds, who had been probably beaten down by the scoriæ, or suffocated by the ashy dust; and on the waters of the gulf itself were seen, among the pieces of light pumice stone with which they were covered, the bodies of countless inhabitants of the sea of all sizes, from the smallest molluscs and crustaceæ to the huge carcases of sharks and crocodiles, who appear to have been killed by the high temperature communicated to the sea by the glowing masses of scoriæ that fell into it. Dead fish were also, I was told, found in great numbers on the surface of Lake Managua, ninety miles off, and the water was entirely covered with ashes.

The population that suffered most from this terrible phenomenon was that of the town of La Union, lying on the shore of the gulf opposite Cosiguina. In more distant places, as at Leon, people found time to hear masses, and implore the assistance of the saints, but here the danger was too close for them to trust only to these

devout methods, and they fled as fast as their legs or their horses could carry them, great numbers proceeding with lanterns and torches in the direction of San Miguel. They did stop, indeed, occasionally, for the performance of some loud devotions, but they were perfectly aware that their best chance lay in getting away as soon as possible.

At San Miguel, though it is situated six and thirty miles from the gulf, the gloom was still most oppressive; all the torches that could be mustered only spread a faint lurid light through the thick atmosphere, and breathing was difficult and painful. The bells were summoning the people incessantly to the churches, but many preferred flying still further from the scene of danger. They scarcely knew, indeed, which way to direct their steps to escape the fearful phenomenon, as many thought it was an eruption of the Conchagua volcano, and some supposed it to be an outbreak from the volcano of San Miguel itself; but a happy instinct seems to have led them in the direction opposite to Cosiguina; or it might be, that the thunders from the gulf served to direct them. The regularity of the intervals between the detonations,

and their continual repetition, soon made it evident that the thunder did not proceed from the electrical discharges of clouds in a high region of the atmosphere, but from below, in the bowels of the earth. The darkness extended far inland in the state of San Salvador; but in the town of San Vicente, in the centre of the republic, and about fifty leagues from Cosiguina, it was no longer so dense. In the city of San Salvador the falling ashes made the gloom about what it is during a heavy storm.

Eastward and southward from the promontory of Cosiguina, the effects of the phenomenon were very similar, and the people of Realejo, as well as those of Chinandega, were ignorant of the point whence the causes of their terror proceeded. That it was a volcanic outbreak they knew, for the people of these countries are too familiar with symptoms of this kind to be mistaken in them; but from the terrific uproar of the explosions, and the density of the cloud of ashes, they considered the centre of action to be much nearer than it was, and ascribed the eruption to their nearest neighbour, the volcano of El Viejo. No one thought of Cosiguina, for it had been always regarded as a long extinguished and perfectly innocent mountain.

I spoke at Chinandega with many eye-witnesses of this occurrence, and they even then turned pale as they told of the terrors of the 20th of January, 1835, and of the days immediately succeeding it. The people fled in a mass to the capital, Leon, forty miles off; but there the darkness and the difficulty of breathing was scarcely less than in their own homes. In Realejo some few had the courage to remain and pray, for both living priests and dead saints always play important parts in calamities of this kind in Central America;—the Spanish creoles having recourse to them in all such critical emergencies, where the impotence of human strength and human knowledge in contending with the great forces of nature is strikingly manifested. Never, even in the pious Catholic state of Nicaragua, did contributions to the churches flow in so abundantly; never were the masses celebrated with so much splendour; never so many wax lights burned before the saints. But all the lights that could be procured could not dissipate the portentous darkness; and the voices of the priests, as they chanted, often suddenly failed, whether from the effects of fear or of ashes did not appear. A British merchant who was here at the time told me that

the brandy bottle was in exceeding request as a means of keeping up people's spirits, and the priests even kept it near them in the pulpit and at the altar,—a somewhat comic incident of this fearful drama.

The eruption continued with the utmost violence for three days, when a gale arose from the north-east, which, by driving the clouds of ashes out to sea, freed the people from the terrible infliction of the darkness; but clouds of steam continued to rise from the volcano for months afterwards. The towns and villages in the neighbourhood of the gulf were silent and empty, for the inhabitants had fled from them *en masse* to the interior; even the capital, Leon, was in a great measure depopulated. An Englishman—a Mr. Byam—who was travelling at that time in the country, stated that in the Cathedral of Leon, when the people found that all their prayers and candles had no effect upon the saints, they brought them out in their finery, and placed them with their faces turned in the direction of the cloud of ashes, it is presumed in order that the "Santos" might judge for themselves how the matter stood. In various parts of Nicaragua a special festival of the Church has

been appointed for the anniversary of this event, and in order to thank the saints for not allowing them to be altogether suffocated.

The distances at which the thunder of this eruption were heard would appear quite incredible were not the fact confirmed by so many still living witnesses. In the capital of Guatemala, 240 miles in a straight line from Cosiguina, the concussion of the air was such as to make the windows shake at every detonation; and in the British colony of Belize, 300 miles off, the supposed artillery was loud enough to induce the English governor to order out the garrison. He imagined that there was a sea-fight going on in the neighbourhood, as the atmosphere was too clear for him to attribute the sound to thunder.

In the opposite direction, the circle of detonation is stated to have extended southwards to New Granada and Quito, close to the equator, and part of the ejected matter was still more widely diffused. Not only in all parts of Central America, but even in the highlands of Mexico, in Vera Cruz, Cuba, and Jamaica, ashes were seen to fall from the sky, and the astonished people could not for a long time discover the cause of the puzzling phenomenon.

Dove and Henry Berghaus consider the surprising diffusion of the ashes from this volcano to the existence of south-westerly currents in the higher regions of the tropical atmosphere above the trade wind; but the shower of ashes fell, as we have seen, in South America, Carracas, and Quito. Could it be that after the event the north wind drove them to this distance? Possibly the enormous projectile force of the volcano may have hurled the ashes into various regions of the air, where opposite currents existed; but, at all events, it appears that the circle of detonation in this Cosiguina eruption had a circumference of 2000, and that of the diffusion of ashes of 4000 miles.

CHAP. XXX.

FROM SONSONATE TO GUATEMALA.

Panorama from the Heights of Callejon de la Bellota. — Wandering Indians. — False Aztecs. — The fruitful Valley of Ahuacapan. — The hospitable Parish Priest. — A Walk through the Settlement. — The Hot Sulphur Springs. — Rio Paza. — Insecurity of the Roads. — Jalpatagua. — An Indian Family Dinner. — "Merry People." — First Sight of the Volcanic Group of Guatemala. — The Bridge over the Rio de los Eselavos. — A Swineherd for President. — Masked Travellers. — Poverty of the Village near the Capital. — Arrival at Guatemala. — Importance of Central America to Capitalists and Emigrants.

FROM Sonsonate to Guatemala (which was now to be for a long time the head quarters for myself and my colleague) the road is a continual steep ascent, following the direction of the Cordillera until you reach the height of Callejon de la Bellota; here it is advisable to stop and enjoy the wonderful prospect opened to your view; on the west the deep blue ocean and the seaport of Acajutla; on the south and east an exquisite mountain landscape, from which rises the burn-

ing mountain of Isalco, with an imposing column of smoke full forty feet high issuing from it. The recent event in the capital had occasioned an unusual degree of agitation and bustle in this region, and numerous Indians, with articles of furniture or goods upon their backs, were toiling along, with their wives and children behind them, towards distant villages presumed to be beyond the sphere of the convulsive movement. Many of them were of mixed Indian and Negro blood, and were small, undersized, but strongly-made men, with reserved, ugly, and brutal-looking faces. The mixture of two races so degenerate as the Indian and Ethiopian is not likely to have a beneficial effect on the descendants*; but it is a mixture unfortunately very

* The two mulatto children, which a speculative Yankee actually imposed on the credulous in Europe, as the last scions of the almost extinct priestly caste of the Aztecs, are nothing more than two remarkably undeveloped individuals of this mixed descent, the twin children of two persons named Innocent and Martina Burgos, who are still living in the village of Decora, in the department of San Miguel. A Spanish trader, of the name of Ramon Selva, got them from the mother, to whom they were very burdensome on account of their helpless awkwardness, under pretence of having them educated in the United States; but instead of that,

common on the frontier of this state towards Honduras. The men wore no clothing, but a white sort of apron and a straw hat; and even the women had the greater part of the body naked, and their unpleasant-looking, long, bag-like breasts hanging fairly down to their hips; they would sometimes pass one of them under their arms or over their shoulders to the child on their back. Their only clothing consisted of a piece of coarse blue stuff wound a few times round the body, and reaching from the hip to the knee. The children go perfectly naked till they are five or six years old, and look extremely dirty.

The first village you come to on this route is one called Apaneca, situated 5000 feet above the Pacific Ocean, and inhabited by full-blood Indians, and thence you descend into the magnificent valley or slope of Ahuacapan, in the centre of which is a market-town of the same name. The tuffa soil here is of boundless fertility; having also the advantage of a most plentiful supply of water, from which circum-

he made a show of them, and afterwards sold them to a person named Morris, who is at present, I believe, parading them about in the best company of Europe.

stance, indeed, the place takes its name. I met with an extremely hospitable reception in the house of the parish priest, Don Isidro Menendez, who, although sickly and advanced in years, still retained an unusual degree of activity of mind; and though the future prospects of his own country lay evidently nearest to his heart, he was by no means without interest and sympathy for those of Europe. He was not only uncommonly well-informed, but extremely liberal in his opinions, and regarded the Russo-Turkish conflict with quite different eyes from those of his ecclesiastical colleague, the worthy "Saint of Mosonte," in the highlands of Nicaragua,—appearing much more anxious for the triumph of freedom than for the possession of the Holy Sepulchre. The dread of the Russian knout had indeed, to an extraordinary degree, seized on the minds of the people of Central America, accustomed as they were to servitude under the Spaniards, and of the general violence and brutality of the Czar's government they entertained certainly exaggerated ideas.

At dinner, at which several female "relatives" of the priest took part, and which afforded a fine display of the delicacies of the country,

the conversation turned, almost exclusively, on European affairs.

The company had so many questions to ask that they scarcely gave themselves time to hear the answers ; it was an incessant brisk fire of questions and replies, which wearied the person interrogated without making the interrogator, in general, one iota the wiser. The ladies wished to be informed concerning the fashions and the material enjoyments of social life in Europe ; the Padre desired to hear of the emperor of Russia and Kossuth, the Pope and Mazzini, and Louis Napoleon, and both carried on their catechism without intermission. It was a mercy for me that the family were in the habit of taking a siesta after dinner, so that I got rid of my importunate questioners for a time, and was free to take a walk through the village.

It contains about 8000 people, about one-half Indians, who employ themselves so extensively in the cultivation of the sugar-cane, that in Ahuacapan and its environs 20,000 *Arobas* (250 tons) of brown sugar are annually produced, and coffee is also cultivated. Most of the inhabitants speak exclusively Spanish, and have entirely for-

gotten their Indian mother tongue. Although, in former times, a prosperous, flourishing place, Ahuacapan had no public building worthy of notice, and even its church is a very poor structure, which would not fix the attention for a moment, but that immediately before the chief entrance, a cocoa-palm and a gigantic pine rise up, as if in emulation, towards Heaven.

What a wonderful climate must that be in which the queen of the tropic zone and the proud representative of the northern hemisphere can both develope themselves with equal vigour!

In the immediate environs of Ahuacapan, not more than three miles eastward of the village, there are numerous hot sulphur springs, called by the natives *hornillos*, *ausoles*, or sometimes *infernillos*, which, like those at Meravalles, are continually bubbling up with a considerable sound from the earth. The country people ascribe wonderful healing powers to these springs, and regard them as most extraordinary phenomena, whilst they are in reality only ordinary sulphureous thermal springs, such as are found in many parts of the world, and are closely connected with the volcanic struc-

ture of the country. I met with them in all the five states of Central America, in the neighbourhood of active as well as of apparently extinct volcanoes. The ground near them, though covered with clay, was so hot, that I several times had the thick soles of my shoes burnt off, and the Indians did not venture to approach them barefoot. Horses and mules become shy and frightened when they come near these *hornillos*, and can neither bear the heat of the ground, nor the sulphureous vapours proceeding from it. I had unfortunately no opportunity of trying with the thermometer the heat of these springs; but eggs are very quickly boiled in them. It does not appear that they are turned to account as baths, though, for the cutaneous diseases so prevalent in the country they would probably be highly beneficial.

On the 3rd of May, at ten in the morning, we passed the Rio Paza, which forms the north-western boundary of San Salvador towards Guatemala; it is a fine river, which rises in the neighbourhood of the Cerro Chingo, in the south-east, and flows towards the Pacific Ocean. During the rainy season it attains a considerable height, and can only be crossed in canoes,

but when we passed it it was not more than four feet deep and 200 broad, though even then the passage was not altogether safe for persons on foot. I saw some Indian women with children on their backs two-thirds covered by the water, and my mule sank up to its neck in the current. A league northward from Ahuacapan the richness of vegetation declines, and the road leads for a considerable way over a stony, barren, treeless, and sunburnt tract.

Of late years the country between Sonsonate and Guatemala had, I was told, again become insecure, and there were few villages where travellers could with much confidence stop to pass the night; they were obliged to confine themselves to certain stations if they wished to avoid the risk of being robbed, or perhaps murdered. We reached the village of Jalpatagua in the afternoon, and might easily have continued our ride for some hours longer had we not been stopped by this consideration. The next secure halting-place was so far off that we could not reach it before sunset, and, had I myself been so inclined, my servants were not to be induced by any consideration to be upon the road after nightfall. Although, therefore, our day's journey had been

only fifteen miles, we prepared to pass the night in Jalpatagua, and found some tolerably eligible quarters in the corridor of the former Dominican convent, which serves at present for the quarters of a secular priest who comes from a neighbouring village a few times in the year to distribute among the inhabitants the blessings and consolations of the Roman Catholic Church.

There was a sort of housekeeper attached to the abandoned convent, a dirty, ugly Indian woman, who when we came in was sitting on the ground with her four naked children having their dinner on boiled yucca roots, and sugar-cane which served the little ones for dessert. The whole family had an extremely unhealthy appearance, having pale thin faces, and great swollen stomachs, which may not improbably have been occasioned by the too exclusive use of the above-mentioned diet.

The greatest poverty prevailed throughout the village, and my servants had much difficulty in procuring for me a little rice and a few tortillas, and neither milk nor eggs were to be had at all. And yet, in spite of this destitution, the marimba (a thing like a chopping-board made use of by way of a musical instrument) was

sounding away merrily in the huts, accompanied by wild shouts and symptoms of jollity, such as may be heard in a German village at fair time. There was something in this dancing distress and singing starvation that at first reminded me of a gentleman in difficulties drowning his cares in champagne, but it was in reality a very different thing. The jollification went on the whole night; and when, the next morning, I inquired of my Indian hostess what had been the occasion of all this festivity, she replied that it had no other occasion than that the inhabitants of Jalpatagua were "merry people, and like to amuse themselves with singing and dancing," and that these nightly merrymakings were of no unfrequent occurrence.

When we set off in the morning a great part of the inhabitants had just gone to bed; the huts were closed, the streets empty, and no one was to be seen but a few women, who were going with great earthen pitchers on their heads to fetch water.

At noon on this day we reached the Cuesta del Oratorio, where, at a height of 4000 feet, the first coniferæ again made their appearance; the climate is here pleasant and moderate, and the

vegetation fresh and smiling. The Oratorio is an insignificant hamlet of a few poor Indian huts; but here, through an opening like that of a scene on the stage, I beheld for the first time the wonderful forms of the renowned volcanoes of Fuego and Agua in the highlands of Guatemala, and felt that I was approaching a mighty mountain world.

We made a short halt at Pueblo de los Esclavos, not far from which a handsome stone bridge of nine arches crosses the river, though at this spot it is scarcely five feet wide, with difficulty forcing its way through immense masses of rock, and forming a cascade of ten feet in depth. The first bridge across this Rio de los Esclavos was built in 1692, but the present one has only been standing since 1810; and it is very characteristic of the state of the arts in this country that this very simple and ordinary structure is considered the finest bridge in Central America, and looked on by the people here as a most astonishing performance. The third night after our departure from Sonsonate we passed in the village of Cuajiniquilapa, consoling ourselves for the badness of our quarters with the thought that we were now only forty-

two miles from the capital of Guatemala. As in all Indian villages, the huts here lie scattered about without any attempt at order, so that there cannot be said to be any streets, and the people looked dirtier and more wretched, if possible, than those of the villages we had previously passed through. I no longer wondered that it should have been possible for a rude Indian swineherd to raise himself to the position of head of the State; it really seemed that such a one might be the most suitable head for such a people.

I rose the next morning with the pleasant prospect that this day would be the last of the rude, wandering life I had now led for four months; for by the evening I hoped to reach Guatemala, the largest, handsomest, and most comfortable town in Central America, where I intended making a long stay. By five o'clock, we were riding out of Cuajiniquilapa, and immediately afterwards ascended a rather steep height, whence, at 4500 feet, my eyes were refreshed by the sight of a lovely green meadow, extending further than the eye could reach; whilst afar in the remote background rose in airy, misty outline the fantastic forms of the

giant burning mountains of Guatemala. Near the Cerro Retondo, we had to pass through a sort of hollow way (*Callejon*), which in former times stood in very evil repute for the robberies committed there, and which had still not altogether lost its bad character. "*Es un paso muy malo*," said my guide, and advised me to look to my arms. Just as we were jogging on through this "*muy malo*" pass, a party of horsemen came up, who, though well dressed, all wore white masks, a circumstance which, having our minds possessed with the notion of robbers, occasioned us to form some conjectures little to their advantage; but the fact was that they were no highwaymen, but merely some vain, dandified fellows from the capital, who wore the masks to prevent their brown complexions from becoming a shade or two darker. Some years ago, this custom of travelling in masks during the hot hours of the day was very common among the higher classes of Guatemala; but since then people have discovered the many objections to the practice, and, amongst others, its extreme convenience to robbers, so that it is now only adopted by those who have a more than ordinary dread of exposing their faces to the tropical sun.

After a ride of six hours, we stopped for our noonday rest at the Hacienda de la Puerta, at the foot of an immense mountain; and as there appeared some likelihood of a storm coming on, my lazy guides endeavoured to induce me on that pretence to stay here till the following morning. I declined doing so, however, and we reached the highest point of the mountain, Alto de los Verdes (5000 feet above the Pacific), at two o'clock in the afternoon. Here we met another party of travellers who had left the capital in the morning, and who seemed to regard our little caravan with considerable suspicion; not, I must own, to judge from appearances, altogether undeserved. My two attendants were tall, rather sinister-looking figures, each carrying a long, sharp knife naked in his sinewy hand; and I, in my red woollen shirt and high boots, with a revolver and a dagger stuck in my girdle, a sword at my side, a double-barrelled gun at the pommel of my saddle, and the marks of my four months' forest travelling very obvious in my neglected toilette, was certainly as ill-looking a fellow as they could well meet. What could be more natural than that they should have a bad opinion of us, especially as they were evidently newly arrived from Eu-

rope, and it might not, perhaps, occur to them that one cannot travel in this country in fashionable costume and varnished boots!

In the course of the afternoon we passed through several Indian villages, more melancholy in their destitution than any I had seen in other parts of Central America. The huts were made of thin laths scantily covered with withered maize leaves, and looking scarcely capable of keeping out a single heavy shower, and so low that a good-sized man on a mule could look over the roof of the highest of them. And this miserable condition, it is to be remembered, is not found in a remote region and on a barren soil, but on a rich fertile plain only a few miles from the capital of the country. In some of these villages were still to be seen the withered, sunburnt remains of the triumphal arches erected about a year before to celebrate the return of the despotic President from his campaign in the more liberal Honduras; erected, be it said, by command of his government; and now, in their deplorable decay, they seemed mockingly to symbolise the ephemeral glory of the Indian Dictator.

Nine or ten miles before you reach the metro-

polis the way becomes broader, better, and more like a high road; and there is also a perceptible increase in the traffic. You meet many market-people returning from the town with empty baskets, but themselves often in the state called "*full*," and mostly in jovial humour; their gay costume and their somewhat unsteady gait suggesting that you are approaching a great town. Booths then make their appearance, with all kinds of eatables and dainties, — sausages, fruits, cakes, liqueurs, &c., — and at length Guatemala itself, with its enormous mass of houses, which, however, have a more imposing appearance when approached from the west side from the Guardia Viejo. The most profound stillness reigned in the streets, and they were perfectly empty, though it was not more than nine o'clock in the evening when I alighted at the quarters to which I had been recommended; and the following morning, with body and mind equally refreshed, the "traveller from the Danube" awoke to a most glorious day, and was saluted by all the charms of tropical nature in the capital of the Indian highlands. But the impressions, experiences, and investigations that

occupied me during my half year's residence there form a particular episode in my Central American travelling-life, — and must be reserved for some future occasion. Let me only be permitted a few words more, in order to repeat more emphatically the remarks I have occasionally made concerning the advantages offered to emigrants by Central America, both as an agricultural state and as the greatest commercial highway of the world. It is probable that a new era of its history is approaching, with a more orderly state of public affairs, and that security of person and property without which all the natural blessings that can be bestowed upon a country will not prevent it from languishing miserably. But when the Yankee has once made up his mind that an idea is practicable and profitable, he seldom allows much time to elapse without setting about the execution of it. Yet a little while, and the men who have turned the forests of the Ohio and the Mississippi into glorious gardens will be trying their strength on the primeval woods of the Cordillera. Roads will be running in all directions, towns springing up, and such an energetic

bustle going on as has not been seen in this part of America since its conquest by the Spanish adventurers of the sixteenth century.

The cutting down of the woods here may, perhaps, on account of their luxuriant vegetation, be attended with greater difficulty than a similar labour in the United States, but the reward of the labour is far more abundant. In the elevated plains of Central America, too, the settler has neither the enervating heat of a North American summer nor the rigorous cold of a North American winter to contend against. In a temperature of perpetual spring, on a soil that needs no manure, and yet yields two or three harvests in the year, the activity of the husbandman need never be interrupted, nor need he fear that at any season this activity will involve any injury to his health. On the plateaux of Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala, at a height of from 3000 to 4000 feet above the sea, there are regions of incalculable extent and fertility, where millions of settlers might find room and profitable occupation; and I should be heartily glad if these pages should help to call towards them the attention of farmers and capitalists

of my own and other countries. Provided only that the emigration be undertaken on a sufficiently extensive scale, I do not believe there is a country in the world which offers more advantages to numerous classes of European settlers than the terraced Isthmus of Central America.

THE END.

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BETWEEN

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	English miles.
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„ Virgin Bay to Granada (viâ Rivas) - - -	66
„ Granada to Massava - - - - -	12
„ Massava to Managua (viâ Nindiri) - - -	24
„ Managua to Matagalpa (viâ Tipitapa) - -	108
„ Matagalpa to Tegucigalpa - - - -	240
„ Tegucigalpa to Comayagua - - - -	72
„ Comayagua to San Salvador - - - -	450
„ San Salvador to Sonsonate - - - -	54
„ Sonsonate to Guatemala - - - - -	135

TABLE

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1 Vara = 3 Spanish feet, or 33 English inches.

1 square Vara = 9 Castilian feet, or 144 square inches.

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